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THE ALDINE EDITION
OF THE BRITISH
POETS



THE POEMS OF BURNS
THREE VOLUMES
VOL I.

THE POETICAL WORKS OF
ROBERT BURNS
VOLUME I



LONDON:
BELL AND DALDY, YORK STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.

TO
JAMES RUSSELL, ESQ.
OF THE INNER TEMPLE, BARRISTER AT LAW,
THIS EDITION OF
BURNS
IS INSCRIBED AS A TESTIMONY OF ESTEEM
AND FRIENDSHIP.

[1839]



PREFACE.

SINCE the appearance of the first Aldine Edition of the Poems of Burns, great exertions have been made to obtain materials for a more complete collection of his works than had hitherto been given to the world. With this object, upwards of TWO HUNDRED LETTERS OR POEMS, in *Burns' own hand-writing*, were purchased, many of which had never been printed; while some of those that had been already published afford important variations, and occasionally supply even entire stanzas.

The possession of these valuable manuscripts led to the resolution of giving, for the first time, a collection of Burns' Poems containing all the variations in the text which were either found in former editions, or supplied by the new matter thus obtained. Before explaining the plan which has been adopted, it may be desirable to notice the editions printed in the lifetime, and under the superintendence of the Poet.

The *first* Edition, entitled "*Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, by Robert Burns,*" printed at Kilmarnock by John Wilson, in August 1786, is a

thin octavo, of 240 pages. It contains a Preface, but no Dedication, and has the following lines, probably written by Burns, on the title-page:

"The simple Bard unbroke by rules of art,—
He pours the wild effusions of the heart:
And if inspir'd, 'tis Nature's pow'rs inspire;
Her's all the melting thrill, and her's the kindling fire.
ANONYMOUS."

The *second* Edition has the same Title without the verses, and was printed at Edinburgh in April 1787, "for the Author, and sold by William Creech," and forms an octavo of 368 pages. It was dedicated "to the Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt," and differs from the first edition by not having any Preface, by the insertion of a long list of Subscribers, and by the introduction of many new Poems and Songs. In the same year, the volume was printed in London, "for A. Strahan; T. Cadell, in the Strand; and W. Creech, Edinburgh;" and is called in the title-page, "The Third Edition;" but it differs in no other respect from the Edinburgh impression.

The next Edition appeared in April 1793,* in two small octavos, printed at Edinburgh, "for T. Cadell, London, and William Creech, Edinburgh;" and was called "The Second Edition, considerably enlarged," though it differs from the preceding one only in the order in which some of the pieces occur, and by the insertion of "The Lament

* In a Letter to Mr. Miller, written in April 1793, Burns says, "My Poems have just come out in a new Edition; will you do me the honour to accept of a copy?"

for the Earl of Glencairn.”* Those volumes were reprinted at Edinburgh, in the same form, with merely a few verbal alterations, and for the same parties, in 1794, which was the last impression of Burns’ Works published in his lifetime.†

It is remarkable that the Poet should not have materially added to the Edition of 1793 or that of 1794; but it is certain, that he revised the last one with great care, for in a letter to Mr. James Johnstone, in that year, he says, “I am just now busy correcting a new edition of my Poems, and this with ordinary business, finds me in full employment.” As the Edition of 1794 received Burns’ *last corrections*, it has been made the text of this impression. The variations between the Editions of 1787, 1793, and 1794 are very slight; and such as are in any degree curious are pointed out in the notes.

Some of the Poems in the Edition of 1794 have been collated with copies in Burns’ writing, and the variations are shown; but the text of those which he did not insert has, wherever possible, been formed upon his autograph copies.

The possession of so many of Burns’ MSS. has

* Burns sent a copy of his Poems to the Earl of Glencairn, the brother of his late patron, saying he had endeavoured to express his sense of the late Earl’s goodness, and the anguish of his soul at losing his truly noble protector and friend “in a Poem to his memory, which I have now published. This edition is just from the press.” The letter is not dated, and the date assigned to it is May 1794, but as “The Lament” occurs in the edition of 1793, it is not certain whether that impression or the next, in 1794, is alluded to.

† The Edition of 1794 was reprinted in 1800, with a Portrait.

enabled the Publisher to print a few of the Poet's effusions for the first time; and if it be said that they add little to his reputation, it must be remembered that the avidity of the public for every thing that Burns ever wrote, precludes his Editors from performing the most important part of their duty. They cannot venture to reject any poem however insignificant, unless absolutely indecent, without risking the success of the impression; for the various editions are estimated by the number, and not by the merit, of the pieces they may contain. That this plan of editing Burns' works is as injurious to his fame, as it is contrary to his earnest and pathetic injunctions, his present Editor is painfully aware. But for the reason assigned, he was compelled, (without any fault of his Publisher), to follow a course of which neither his own feelings, nor his judgment approved.

The Notes have been almost entirely selected from Burns' Letters. His readers consequently learn from *himself* the circumstances and feelings under which his Poems were composed; and though valuable additions have often been derived from Mr. Allan Cunningham's extensive information, as well as from other sources, the main object, of *making Burns the illustrator of his own productions*, has always been kept in view; and almost every word he has written respecting his Poems has now been appended to them. Of criticism, enough, and more than enough, will be found in many other editions; while the failure of recent attempts to say any thing original on Burns' genius, or new and piquant on his Songs,

affords a warning not to be neglected by a less ambitious, and perhaps less qualified Editor.

The space to which the Memoir of Burns was necessarily confined, rendered it impossible to do more than give a brief account of his life and character. The sketch was published nearly ten years ago; but a deeper study of that extraordinary person, and an attentive perusal of all that has since appeared about him, have produced little change in the opinions which were then expressed. The Memoir has, however, been carefully revised, and many additions made to it.

Though this Edition only professes to contain Burns' POEMS, the extracts from his Letters in the Notes and Memoir are so extensive, that little of any interest has been omitted; and there would consequently have been but slight impropriety, if it had been entitled THE LIFE, POEMS, and CORRESPONDENCE of ROBERT BURNS.

March 10, 1839.



MEMOIR OF BURNS.

BY SIR HARRIS NICOLAS.

"He glows with all the spirit of the Bard;
Fame, honest Fame, his great, his dear reward."

PERHAPS few men have been more honoured by having had eminent biographers than ROBERT BURNS; for within less than forty years after his death, his life had been written, and his genius illustrated, by many distinguished authors, including Lockhart, Wordsworth, and Walter Scott. When to these are added the little piece of autobiography which Burns himself drew up, his correspondence, the narrative of his brother, the laboured account of him by Currie, the elaborate collection of his Letters and Poems by Mr. Allan Cunningham, the slight but valuable elucidations of his history by his contemporaries, and, perhaps better than all, the characteristic sketches which occur in his productions, a mass of materials is collected, which requires the nicest skill to form into a judicious Memoir.*

In glancing at what has been done to perpetuate the fame of Burns, one fact is too striking to be passed over; but it cannot be alluded to without propitiating the hostility, which the mention of it is, perhaps, calculated to produce among those by whom, to their honour and his own, he is most venerated and admired. The biographers of Burns are, with few exceptions, his countrymen; and, in labouring to exalt their National Poet, they have extenuated his faults, and even denied many of his vices. According to the order in which they followed each other, their admiration has increased; and the merits of even the most valuable Lives of Burns are lessened by the panegyrical tone that is every where conspicuous. It is a canon of History, that writers living nearest the period under discussion, are the best authorities; but it has been the effort of succeeding narrators of Burns' career to shade down those errors which their predecessors had delineated in true colours. Some of his contemporaries, now viewing him through the vista of years, lose the dark parts of his character in the brightness which fame has cast round his memory; and have not only persuaded themselves that indiscretion is the utmost with which he can be properly charged, but have denied the existence of faults proved by his own confession.

No one who loves Poetry, or admires Genius, can fail to wish that the author of "The Cotter's Saturday Night," had been uniformly correct in his conduct and feelings; but a biographer owes a stronger duty to the world than to the subject

of his labours; and in no case is it more dangerous to the best interests of society, to tamper with truth, or to give a false colouring to vice, than in describing a man whose writings excite universal admiration.

ROBERT BURNS was born in an humble cottage on the banks of the Doon, in the district of Kyle, about two miles to the south of the town of Ayr, on the 25th of January, 1759. There was something romantic in an accident which befell him in the first week of his existence. The frail tenement in which he saw the light, and which had been erected by the hands of his father, gave way at midnight; and the infant and his mother were conveyed, through a storm, to a neighbouring cottage.

His father, William Burness,* was the son of a farmer in Kincardineshire, whence he removed at the age of nineteen, in consequence of the distress of his family. As the farm on which they lived was part of the estate forfeited by the house of Keith-Marischal, in 1715, Burns was wont to flatter himself that his ancestors had followed the fortunes of their Chief, in his efforts to restore their legitimate Sovereign. His self-delusion on this subject is another proof of the universal love of ancestral fame; for though descended from the humblest lineage, and an advocate for the equality of man, the Poet, nevertheless, sought in the his-

* The Poet spelt his name *Burness* until the publication of the first volume of his poems in 1786. He has twice alluded to his birthday in his Poems.

tory of his forefathers for something to gratify his pride. Their patriotism existed however only in his own imagination; and his brother has treated the idea as a fiction.

Though a mere peasant, William Burness was superior to the class by which he was surrounded. He was endowed with strong sense and considerable powers of observation; and his natural talents were improved by such an education as a Scottish parish school afforded. Strictly religious, and of unblemished integrity, he inspired his children with reverence and affection; and, in the character of "the priest-like father" of the *Cotter's Saturday Night*, his eldest son has pronounced an imperishable eulogy on his worth. Of his mother, Agnes Brown, to whom William Burness was united in December 1757, the Poet has said little more than that she frequently repeated fragments of old Scottish Songs and Ballads to him in his childhood; and though in one of his letters he has described her "as a very sagacious woman without forwardness or awkwardness of manner," he could find no higher commendation for her in his family picture than

"The Mither wi' her needle an' her sheers
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new."

For the formation of his character (at least as much as it was formed by culture), he appears to have been indebted to his father; and he undoubtedly inherited "the headlong, ungovernable irascibility and ungainly integrity," to which he ascribes his parent's distresses.

When the future Poet was between six and seven years of age, his father removed to the farm of Mount Oliphant, in the parish of Ayr, on which he was placed in 1766, by the kindness of Mr. Ferguson, of Doonside, to whom he had acted as gardener. This undertaking did not prosper; and on Mr. Ferguson's death, his affairs fell into the hands of a factor, who treated Burness with such harshness, that he has been consigned to obloquy by his son, not only in the description of him in "The Twa Dogs," but in a passage of one of his letters, written at a period so distant, that if his conduct had not been peculiarly cruel, the offence would scarcely have been remembered with so much bitterness. Being driven from this farm, Burness removed with his family about the year 1772, to Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, and for some time his affairs prospered. Here his sons were placed under the care of John Murdoch, who undertook to teach the children of the farmers at Lochlea; and that worthy person has given a very interesting account of Robert Burns and his brother, about this time: "Gilbert," he says, "always appeared to me to possess a more lively imagination, and to be more the wit than Robert. I attempted to teach them a little Church music. Here they were left far behind by all the rest of the school. Robert's ear, in particular, was remarkably dull, and his voice untunable. It was long before I could get them to distinguish one tune from another. Robert's countenance was generally grave, and expressive of a serious, contemplative, and thoughtful mind. Gilbert's face

said, 'Mirth, with thee I mean to live;' and certainly, if any person who knew the two boys, had been asked which of them was the most likely to court the Muses, he would never have guessed that Robert had a propensity of that kind."

Of himself, at that period, Burns said—"I was by no means a favourite with any body. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn, sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say idiot piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantrips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of Poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was 'The Vision of Mirza,' and a hymn of Addison's, beginning, 'How are Thy

servants blest, O Lord !' I particularly remember one half-stanza, which was music to my boyish ear :

'For though on dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave.'

I met with these pieces in 'Mason's English Collection,' one of my school-books. The two first books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were 'The Life of Hannibal' and 'The History of Sir William Wallace.' Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier ; while the story of Wallace poured a tide of Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest. For several of my earlier years I had few other authors ; and many a solitary hour have I stole out, after the laborious vocations of the day, to shed a tear over their glorious but unfortunate stories. In those boyish days, I remember, in particular, being struck with that part of Wallace's story, where these lines occur—

'Syne to the Leglen wood, when it was late,
To make a silent and a safe retreat.'

"I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day my line of life allowed, and walked half a dozen miles to pay my respects to the Leglen wood, with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loretto ; and explored every den and dell where

I could suppose my heroic countryman to have lodged."

Murdoch having been appointed master of the Grammar School of Ayr, the two brothers were sent to him "week about;" and in the winter's evenings their father instructed them in arithmetic, and such other knowledge as he possessed. Great part of their time was, however, passed in the labours of the farm; but all their exertions failed to support them. Gilbert Burns has given a very melancholy description of their situation and prospects; and it can scarcely be doubted that their poverty and privations had a material influence on the future character of the Poet.

Before Burns had attained his sixteenth year, he made his first attempt in Poetry, inspired by his partner in the labours of the harvest, "a bewitching creature, a year younger" than himself, "a bonie, sweet, sonsie lass." He celebrated her charms in the little ballad—

"O once I lov'd a bonie lass,"*

and according to his account of the affair, she was not indifferent to a passion, "the recollection of which," he says, many years afterwards, "made his heart melt and his blood sally."

The brothers continued to be employed as regular labourers by their father, with wages of £7 per annum; and at this time Robert was remarkable for vigour and strength, being superior in rustic feats to all his competitors. According to Gilbert's testimony, his love of literature de-

* See the note to this song in vol. iii.

creased, which his partial biographers have attributed to his separation from his friends in Ayr, who stimulated his zeal, and supplied him with books. The truth however is, that those strong passions, to which Burns was first the slave, and then the victim, now held absolute dominion over him, and swept away all better feelings. Of himself at this period he has given a very interesting statement, and his candour and veracity entitle him to full credit:

“In my seventeenth year,” says Burns, “to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes. My father was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me, he took a sort of dislike to me, which I believe was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years. I say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the Will-o’-wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I saw my father’s situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of fortune, were the gates of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I could never squeeze myself into it;—the last

I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance ! Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity, as from a pride of observation and remark ; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriacism that made me fly solitude ; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense : and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that, always where two or three met together, there was I among them. But far beyond all other impulses of my heart, was *un penchant pour l'adorable moitié du genre humain*. My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other : and, as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various, sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance ; and as I never cared farther for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on a love adventure without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity, that recommended me as a proper second on these occasions ; and I dare say, I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe.”

The account of his early habits given by his brother will be read with equal pleasure:—"The seven years we lived in Tarbolton parish, extending from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth of my brother's age, were not marked by much literary improvement; but, during this time, the foundation was laid of certain habits in my brother's character, which afterwards became but too prominent, and which malice and envy have taken delight to enlarge on. Though, when young, he was bashful and awkward in his intercourse with women, yet when he approached manhood, his attachment to their society became very strong, and he was constantly the victim of some fair enslaver. The symptoms of his passion were often such as nearly to equal those of the celebrated Sappho. I never indeed knew that he 'fainted, sunk, and died away;' but the agitations of his mind and body exceeded anything of the kind I ever knew in real life. He had always a particular jealousy of people who were richer than himself, or who had more consequence in life. His love, therefore, rarely settled on persons of this description. When he selected any one out of the sovereignty of his good pleasure to whom he should pay his particular attention, she was instantly invested with a sufficient stock of charms, out of the plentiful stores of his own imagination; and there was often a great dissimilitude between his fair captivator, as she appeared to others, and as she seemed when invested with the attributes he gave her."

His Muse was not, however, wholly idle; but with the exception of two little poems of some

merit, she merely inspired him with praises of various rural divinities. In one of his Songs* he describes his reflections on his own fate, which shows that ambition had begun to disturb his peace. Some portion of his nineteenth year was passed in learning mensuration and surveying at a school at Kirkoswald, where smuggling with its attendant demoralizing effects prevailed. The temptations to which he was exposed proved irresistible. To a youth conscious of possessing the disposition and talents likely to render him an acceptable companion, a love of society is natural; and though it may be regretted, there is nothing criminal or surprising in the fact, that young Burns found pleasure in the convivial meetings of smugglers. His temperament needed not the excitement of wine to lead him still further astray; and his studies were soon abandoned for the company of a young girl, with whom he fell desperately in love.† During his abode at Kirkoswald, he says, "his reading was enlarged; he had seen human nature in a new phasis, and he commenced a literary correspondence with several of his schoolfellows." Love and trifling were his chief occupations until his twenty-third year; and at that period he observes, "Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind; but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand;

* "My father was a farmer upon the Carrick Border."

† She is commemorated in the song "Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns:" see also the songs "I'll kiss thee yet;" "Young Peggy;" and "Montgomerie's Peggy," and the notes.

I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary turn of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they found vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet."

According to his own testimony, confirmed by that of his brother, the turbulent passions which he ascribes to himself, had as yet produced no results positively immoral; but a lamentable change in his habits soon took place.

In June 1781 he went to Irvine, to learn the trade of a flax-dresser, his motive being to acquire the means of marrying. A fire, however, destroyed the shop, and with it all Burns' little property. "The clouds of misfortune," he says, "were gathering thick round my father's head; and what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption; and, to crown my distresses, a belle fille whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification.* The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was, my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—'Depart from me, ye cursed!'"

If the letter which he wrote to his father in December 1781, a few days before the fire, was not the momentary effect of depressed spirits,

* Perhaps the "Bonnie Peggy Alison" referred to in the last note.

occasioned by his love affair and ill health, the state of his mind must have been deplorable :—
“The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind, that I dare neither review past events, nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are alightened, I glimmer a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable employment is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought, that ere long, perhaps, very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains and uneasiness and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it; and if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

‘The soul, uneasy, and confined at home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.’

“As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them,

but which I hope have been remembered ere it is yet too late."

That the moral thoughts expressed in this letter were not sufficiently rooted to produce correct conduct, is unfortunately evident from his brother's remark, that he contracted some acquaintances at Irvine of a freer manner of thinking and living than he had been used to, whose society prepared him for overleaping the bounds of rigid virtue which had hitherto restrained him. Burns himself says, that a friendship formed there, with a person whose superior knowledge of the world gave him great influence over his mind, did him harm, inasmuch as that individual "spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor, which hitherto I had regarded with horror."* About this time he became a freemason, and was introduced to the lodge by John Rankine, a very dissipated but extremely clever man, to whom he afterwards addressed a poetical epistle. From this association he acquired a taste for convivial meetings which never left him; and thenceforward his career was often erratic and discreditable. Nor was any favourable change in his pursuits produced by the death of his father, in February, 1784, on which event he thus feelingly speaks; "On the 13th current I lost the best of fathers. Though to be sure, we have had long warning of the impending stroke, still the feelings of nature

* The person alluded to is reported to have exclaimed, in reference to Burns' statement respecting him, and apparently with great truth, "Illicit love! Levity of a sailor! the Poet had nothing to learn that way when I saw him first."

claim their part ; and I cannot recollect the tender endearments and parental lessons of the best of friends and the ablest of instructors, without feeling what perhaps the calmer dictates of reason would partly condemn." His beautiful epitaph on

" The tender Father, and the gen'rous friend,
The pitying heart that felt for human woe,
The dauntless heart that fear'd no human pride ;
The friend of man, to vice alone a foe,"

is universally known, and is pathetic proof of his filial love.

On going to Irvine, he says, he gave up rhyme, " but meeting with Fergusson's Scottish Poems, I strung anew my wildly-sounding lyre with emulating vigour."

Shortly before his father's death, Burns and his brother took the farm of Mossgiel, near Mauchline, as an asylum for their parents in the wreck of their affairs. On that occasion the Poet resolved, to be wise, and with characteristic ardour, attended for a short time to his agricultural labours. He was not, however, likely to be exempt from the usual accompaniment of ardent minds, an aptness to fly off from its object on incurring a check in his pursuits. In the first two years they lost half their crops, and this disappointment destroyed all Robert's good intentions respecting the farm. A connexion formed at Mossgiel about 1784, with one of his mother's servants, made him the father of the " sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess" of one of his Songs ; an offence which he expiated, according to the strict rule of the Kirk, by per-

forming penance. This circumstance roused the irascible temperament of the offender ; and in his "Epistle to Rankine," he wreaked his vengeance on the clergyman of the parish, as the immediate instrument of his disgrace. His "Welcome to his Illegitimate Child"* and "The Rantin Dog the Daddie o't,"† are remarkable for the tenderness they breathe towards his infant and its mother ; though the "Rantin Dog," in which affection for the latter is most feelingly expressed, has been unjustly said to "exhibit the Poet as glorying, and only glorying in his shame."

About this time Burns had acquired considerable local fame. He was known and respected by many persons of a superior condition in life ; and a clergyman has asserted that such were his extraordinary talents that the presence of the young peasant impaired his confidence and self-possession in the pulpit ; a discovery probably made after the Poet's reputation was established. Although he ranked many of the clergy among his friends, he was suspected of unsound opinions on points of faith ; and there is reason to believe, that those "strictures," which are mildly described as having been "too often delivered in no reverent vein," merited a severer character ; for, on his holding forth on one occasion to a crowd of country people, they were so shocked at his levities, that they hissed him from the ground, an effect not very likely to attend a mere

* See this poem and the note to it.

† See the note to this song.

controversial harangue. The bitter feud on doctrinal subjects, which existed between Mac Gill and Dalrymple, the two ministers of the town of Ayr, afforded an admirable field for Burns' satirical powers; and though the "Holy Tulzie," in which they figure, does not stand high among his effusions, it is remarkable for being the first of them that was brought to light; and being received with "a roar of applause," it probably stimulated its author to further exertions. From that moment Burns became known in the country "as a maker of rhymes." "Holy Willie's Prayer," which has been expunged from several editions of his works, soon followed; and by the party opposed to Calvinistic doctrines was highly applauded. The reverend admirers of this poem appear to have compounded with their consciences for being pleased with a piece showing little veneration for religion itself, because it ridiculed the mistaken zeal of an opposite sect. They seem indeed to have witnessed this prostitution of Burns' talents with feelings little creditable to themselves or their order. Instead of warning him that wit ceases to be estimable when it treats sacred subjects with levity, they forgot every benevolent impulse in the gratification of their own spleen; and without shame or remorse suffered the Poet to commit himself in the eyes of the wise and the good. The merit of detaching Burns' mind from such debasing subjects, and of exciting him to employ his talents on higher and worthier themes, was reserved for a layman; and if the admonition had reached him earlier, it is probable that his

fame would be free from the spots by which it is obscured.

It would not be desirable, even if it were possible, to trace all Burns' amorous connexions, or to identify every pretty girl whom he celebrated in verse. His heart was as susceptible as his imagination; and his fair idols succeeded each other with a rapidity which shows that constancy formed no part of his nature. Whatever may be said to prove that these connexions were harmless, it is certain that two of them at least were criminal.

His affections were soon after seriously engaged by an amiable girl, called Mary Campbell, better known as his Highland Mary, who died during their courtship, and whose name is preserved with such touching tenderness in his verses "To Mary in Heaven."*

In 1785, he loved and was beloved by Jean Armour, the daughter of a tradesman at Mauchline, a young girl of much goodness of heart, and great personal charms. When their intercourse could no longer be concealed from the world, he refused to make her the atonement which the similarity of their station and the usage of the country justified her in expecting, the reliance on which might have led to her unfortunate situation. To avoid the responsibility cast upon him, he determined to leave Scotland for the West Indies; and to the remonstrances of one of his friends, he

* See the songs, "The Highland Lassie;" "Highland Mary;" "Prayer for Mary;" "To Mary;" "To Mary in Heaven;" and their respective notes.

coarsely replied, "Against two things I am as fixed as fate—staying at home, and owning her conjugally. 'The first, by Heaven I will not do ;—the last, by Hell I will never do.'" He so far yielded, however, as to consent to see her ; and conceded to her tears and affliction what ought to have proceeded from love and duty. He gave her a written acknowledgment of marriage, which under such circumstances is binding and legal in Scotland. On being informed of what had taken place, Mr. Armour's indignation knew no bounds. He was deaf to his daughter's entreaties for pardon, destroyed the paper which would have restored her fame, and peremptorily forbade her ever again to see or communicate with Burns. Awed by his vehemence, she promised to obey. Her compliance, and the insult offered him by Armour's having preferred that she should become a mother without having been a wife, rather than unite her fate with his, stung him to the heart. Jean gave birth to twins ; and about the same time Burns took measures for securing a passage to Jamaica. Some mystery seems to hang about his conduct, which it is scarcely possible to solve, and perhaps still more difficult to reconcile with any proper principle. He did public penance a second time in the Kirk for his incontinency ; and with his pride deeply wounded and his mind fearfully agitated by resentment, love, and remorse, he was reduced to a state of absolute despair. From the contemplation of his situation he was roused to its realities, by being called upon to find security for the maintenance of his children. The sum

could not have been great ; but he was unable to raise it, and the alternative was expatriation or a jail.* As usual, he gave vent to his feelings in verse ; and much as the admirers of Burns may deplore that he should have practically known the feelings described in "The Lament,"† such a Poem could never have been produced from imagination alone. It is said, and truly, that it must be universally regretted that he who could write this piece should be the victim of such miseries ; but for the indignation at the treatment of the public, with which, according to some of his biographers, that regret ought to be accompanied, there is certainly no just occasion. Burns was then suffering from immoral conduct, not from misfortune ; and talents, however splendid, have no greater claim to commiseration, than would, under similar circumstances, be due to the dullest of mankind. No principle is more dangerous than that which has found so many advocates in the present day, that the possession of genius extenuates acts which, in ordinary persons, would receive unmitigated censure. Experience has taught how differently a Poet can write and feel ;

* In a letter to his friend, Mr. Richmond, dated 30th July 1786, he says, "Would you believe it? Armour has got a warrant to throw me in jail, till I find security for an enormous sum. Thus they keep an entire secret, but I got it by a channel they little dream of; and I am wandering from one friend's house to another, and like a true son of the gospel, have no where to lay my head. I know you will pour an execration on her head, but spare the poor ill-advised girl for my sake."

† Vol. i. p. 140.

and, with every allowance for human inconsistency, it is impossible to believe that a man, who had avowed his repugnance to marry the woman he had ruined, could really feel so much concern at any impediment to his doing so, as is professed in "The Lament."

Much stress is laid upon Burns' connection with Jean Armour; because it establishes, beyond contradiction, either that he was insincere with respect to her, or, what is more likely, that his disposition was wavering and unsettled. He vowed he would not marry her; and within a very few months lamented, as the heaviest of his misfortunes, that she was not his wife. Nor did his consistency on this subject increase after he became her husband; for almost at the same moment in which he represented himself as enjoying perfect connubial bliss, he was unfaithful to her; and if further evidence be wanting that his wife did not entirely possess his heart, it is to be found in the fact, that after a fit of melancholy abstraction one evening, he was induced by her tenderness to return home, when calling for pen and ink, the source of his depression became apparent in a beautiful Ode to a woman whom he had once loved, of whose birth that day happened to be the anniversary!

Not having sufficient funds to pay his passage to the West Indies, he thought the money might be raised by the publication of some of his Poems.*

* An interesting fact concerning his Poems has recently been brought to light. On the 22nd of July, 1786, he exe-

His friends, Mr. Gavin Hamilton, Mr. Aiken, and others, warmly encouraged the idea; and a number of subscribers being obtained, he sent his favourite pieces to press. In a letter to one of his friends, dated the 12th of June, 1786, he said, "You will have heard that I am going to commence Poet in print; and to-morrow my works go to press. I expect it will be a volume of about two hundred pages—it is just the last foolish action I intend to do; and then turn a wise man *as fast as possible*." This epoch is so memorable a one, that the Poet's own account of his feelings is deserving of attention:

"Before leaving my native land, I resolved to publish my Poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power: I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—or, perhaps, a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits. I can truly say, that, *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favour. It ever was my opinion, that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves. To know myself, had been

cuted an assignment of the copyright of his work to his brother, for the maintenance of his illegitimate child, the "Sonsie Bess."—Burns' Works, by Allan Cunningham, vol. viii. p. 217.

all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others: I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet: I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation,—where the lights and shades in character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause; but at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, for which I got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides, I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde; for

‘ Hungry ruin had me in the wind.’

I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail:* as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on

* Burns has no where so touchingly described his feelings at this period, with so much effect, as in his poem,

“ Farewell old Scotia's bleak domains.”

the way to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, 'The gloomy night is gathering fast,' when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition."

The publication of his Poems, which took place about August 1786,* was attended by most gratifying results to their author, who, in common with most highly endowed persons, was more animated by ambition than by any other passion. They were received, it is said, with rapture; and, according to Heron,† "Old and young, high and low, grave and gay, learned or ignorant, were alike delighted, agitated, transported. I was at that time," he says, "resident in Galloway, contiguous to Ayrshire, and I can well remember how even ploughboys and maid servants would have gladly bestowed the wages they earned the most hardly, and which they wanted to purchase necessary clothing, if they might but procure the Works of Burns." By Professor Dugald Stewart and Dr. Blair, and some other individuals of eminence, including Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop, who was ever afterwards his steady friend, the merits of Burns were at once discovered. He soon found himself in a higher class of society than that to which he had been accustomed. The interest he excited encouraged the hope that banishment from his native land, the last refuge of the wretched, might not be his lot; and Hamilton and Aiken remem-

* See the Preface, p. lxxv.

† Life of Burns.

bering that he had learnt gauging, thought a situation in the excise might be obtained for him. There is something peculiarly striking in the picture which he has drawn of his own mind, at this time, in a letter to Mr. Aiken; and the force and propriety of his expressions are remarkable:

“I have been feeling all the various rotations and movements within respecting the excise. There are many things plead strongly against it; the uncertainty of getting soon into business, the consequences of my follies, which may perhaps make it impracticable for me to stay at home; and besides, I have for some time been pining under secret wretchedness, from causes which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering stabs of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals like vultures, when attention is not called away by the calls of society, or the vagaries of the Muse. Even in the hour of social mirth, my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner. All these reasons urge me to go abroad; and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, over-balances everything that can be laid in the scale against it. The world has in general been kind to me, fully up to my deserts. I was for some time past fast getting into the pining distrustful snarl of the misanthrope. I saw myself alone, unfit for the struggle of life, shrinking at every rising cloud in the chance-directed atmosphere of fortune, while, all defenceless, I looked about in vain for a cover. It never

occurred to me, at least never with the force it deserved, that this world is a busy scene, and man a creature destined for a progressive struggle ; and that, however I might possess a warm heart, and inoffensive manners (which last, by the by, was more than I could well boast), still, more than these passive qualities, there was something to be done. When all my school-fellows and youthful compeers were striking off, with eager hope and earnest intent, on some one or other of the many paths of busy life, I was ‘standing idle in the market-place,’ or only left the chase of the butterfly from flower to flower, to hunt fancy from whim to whim. You see, Sir, that if to know one’s errors were a probability of mending them, I stand a fair chance ; but, according to the reverend Westminster divines, though conviction must precede conversion, it is very far from always implying it.”

Three months having been passed in the fruitless hope that a situation would be procured for him in England, his thoughts again reverted to Jamaica ; but a change in his prospects was close at hand.

He went to pay a farewell visit to Dr. Laurie, Minister of Loudon, from whom he and his family had received great kindness, and on leaving the worthy pastor for Grdenock, whence he was to embark, he composed his “Adieu to his native land,” commencing, “The gloomy night is gath’ring fast.” Unknown to the Poet, Dr. Laurie had been exerting himself in his behalf by sending a copy of his productions, with a sketch of his life,

to Dr. Blacklock, at Edinburgh, with a request that he would show it to the most eminent literary persons in that city. Dr. Blacklock's warm eulogium on the work, and his earnest recommendation that a second edition should be immediately printed, were shown to Burns, and imparted equal delight and encouragement. Visions of future fame dawned on his imagination, and a sudden revolution seemed to have occurred in his fortunes. With his usual impetuosity he hastened to Edinburgh, where he arrived early in December, without even a letter of introduction or an acquaintance in that city, sustaining his spirits on his journey by repeating the first verse of an old ballad :

“As I came in by Glenap,
I met an aged woman,
And she bade me cheer up my heart,
For the best of my days was coming.”

By Doctor Blacklock he was presented to Blair and to many other distinguished literary men in Edinburgh; and was patronized by the Honourable Henry Erskine, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates. Liberal subscriptions for the new edition of his Poems flowed in, and notwithstanding the complaints in which many of Burns' biographers have indulged, that no generous patron was found to place him above want, certain it is that few ever derived more advantages from the publication of their first book than Robert Burns. It raised him from obscurity, and the humblest rank in life, to the notice of some of the most celebrated persons of the day; and instead of reaching fame by long

and wearisome journeys—the fate of many Poets of equal merit—he attained its pinnacle at one gigantic bound. He found himself, as if by enchantment, converted from a wretched outcast, seeking an existence in a foreign country, into the object of interest and admiration in the capital of his own; and he who but a short time before had scarcely dared to hope for more than the approbation of a limited circle of rustic neighbours, was now applauded by many eminent literary characters of the age. Among those who contributed to bring his merits into notice was the author of the “Man of Feeling,” who in a paper in the “Lounger” appealed to the public on his behalf with great warmth and elegance. Toasted, as he was, at the Grand Lodge of Masons of Scotland, by the appellation of “Caledonia’s Bard”—overwhelmed by invitations from the highest quarters, flattered by the attentions of the fair, and crowned with laurels by the learned, his ambition must have been fully satisfied.

Burns’ natural sagacity and knowledge of mankind, prevented him from overrating his situation. He was aware that his position was a very precarious one, and that he owed the interest which he excited much more to the extraordinary circumstance that a ploughman should have written so well, than that poems of so much merit were produced; and he was sensible that the feeling which caused his popularity partook too much of novelty to be permanent. He was accustomed to compare himself with others; and the conviction that the time was not distant when he would be

left to his former associates, arose perhaps from the consciousness that though he approached closely to his learned friends in talents, and rivalled many of them in strength and vigour of conversation, as well as in profundity and acuteness of remark, yet that something more is required to place a man on an equality with those who have always lived in good society. His straightforward manly deportment, the tenacity with which he supported his opinions, and the honest bluntness with which he expressed what he thought, were ill suited to the artificial manners of high life. When heated by wine or argument, his voice was loud and decisive, and the conventional tone of polite society, if not decorum itself, was sometimes forgotten. It is, therefore, not surprising that Burns' independent mind sought relief from the restraints imposed on it when associating with persons above him, by hastening to companions of his own class; and he frequently left a fashionable party for a jovial meeting of friends, when he indemnified himself, for a temporary sacrifice of his feelings, by humorously satirizing the assembly he had quitted. His frankness, and the readiness with which he gave utterance to whatever was passing in his mind, startled men of the world; and though they applauded his sallies, and admired his wit, it was not always possible to conceal their supercilious pity at his imprudence. It has happened to more men than Burns, perhaps, indeed, to every one who really enjoys society, to be tortured by the suspicion that he had exposed himself to the ridicule of individuals whose intellect he despises, but who,

from not having soul or feeling enough to be exhilarated, carefully notice every neglect of that cautious reserve on which they pride themselves; a class happily described by the Poet himself, as those

————— douce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool,
Compar'd wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives a dyke!

Burns' exquisite sensibility appears to have rendered him a martyr to feelings of this kind; and he justly doubted "whether we are capable of so intimate and cordial a coalition of friendship, as that one man may pour out his bosom, his every thought and floating fancy, his very inmost soul, with unreserved confidence to another, without hazard of losing part of that respect which man deserves from man."

This was one motive for keeping the private diary which he then commenced. It is often the fate of those who, conscious of great powers, dare to think for themselves, to find that common minds treat their views as Utopian. Against a repetition of such galling treatment, but utterly unable to confine his thoughts to his own bosom, Burns had recourse to his private diary, as a substitute for a living confidant. A temperament such as his, is usually united to morbid jealousy of offence; and his prevailing sentiment was, what Dr. Johnson has happily termed, "defensive pride." This is manifested in all his letters, and

explains many parts of his conduct, which would appear improper and unaccountable, unless viewed as a defence against anticipated rudeness.

In March 1787, the second impression of Burns' Poems was published, and as no less than fifteen hundred persons subscribed, he realized a very considerable sum. With part of this money he placed a tombstone over the remains of Robert Fergusson, an act worthy of a brother Poet. Out of the profits of his work he gave his brother £200, to relieve him from his difficulties: "I give myself no airs on this," he generously says in a letter to Dr. Moore, "for it was mere selfishness on my part. I was conscious that the wrong scale of the balance was pretty heavily charged; and I thought that the throwing a little filial piety and fraternal affection into the scale in my favour, might help to smooth matters at the grand reckoning."

He soon after quitted Edinburgh, apparently under the impression that he should never return, and that having shone with extraordinary splendour for a season, the sun of his popularity had set. Aware that nothing substantial was to be expected from those who had been liberal of their praise, he formed the wise resolution of following his former pursuits. On coming back to Mauchline in June, he was received with enthusiastic welcome; but the kindness of his late associates he termed servility, and the scrutinizing disposition which had made him suspicious of the attentions of his superiors, was now directed to the motives of his equals. Some time was spent in

journeys into Dumfriesshire, where he proposed to take the farm of Dalswinton, the proprietor of which wished him to become his tenant; but he revisited Edinburgh in September 1787, and remained several months in that city. Early in 1788 he formed a friendship with Mrs. M'Lehose, a lady of great beauty, whom he celebrated under the name of "Clarinda."* Their correspondence, which was published surreptitiously, is, to say the least, one of the most extraordinary results of Platonic attachment ever given to the public. While in Edinburgh, Burns composed several pieces for the "Museum of Scottish Songs;" and having broken his leg, was confined to his room for many weeks, during which his correspondence indicates great lowness of spirits, and melancholy forebodings. He appears to have lingered in Edinburgh, with the hope that a situation would be obtained for him; and after a long struggle between his necessities and his pride, he ventured to solicit Lord Glencairn's interest for an appointment in the excise. In his letter he says, "Your lordship's patronage and goodness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have likewise put it in my power to save the little tie of home that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters from destruction," an acknowledgment of obligations which his biographers have not precisely explained. The office thus solicited was obtained, but through another channel.

* Vide the poem "To a Lady with a pair of drinking glasses," and note; and the song "Clarinda."

On "my éclatant return to Mauchline" in June 1787, "I was," he says, "made very welcome to visit my girl.*" The usual consequences

* The following letter, which is for the first time printed, from the original, shows Burns' opinion of the conduct of Jean Armour's family. His "quondam Eliza" was evidently Elizabeth Paton, the mother of his illegitimate child :

"To Mr. James Smith, at Miller and Smith's Office, Linlithgow.

"My ever dear Sir,
"I date this from Mauchline, where I arrived on Friday even last. I slept at John Dows, and called for my daughter; Mr. Hamilton and family; your mother, sister and brother; my quondam Eliza, &c, all, all well. If any thing had been wanting to disgust me compleatly at Armour's family, their mean servile compliance would have done it.

"Give me a spirit like my favourite hero, Milton's Satan,

'Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessor! one who brings
A mind not to be chang'd by *place or time!*'

"I cannot settle to my mind—Farming the only thing of which I know any thing, and Heaven above knows, but little do I understand even of that, I cannot, dare not risk on farms as they are. If I do not fix, I will go for Jamaica. Should I stay, in an unsettled state, at home, I would only dissipate my little fortune, and ruin what I intend shall compensate my little ones, for the stigma I have brought on their names.

"I shall write you more at large soon; as this letter costs you no postage, if it be worth reading you cannot complain of your penny worth.

"I am ever, my dear Sir, yours,

"ROBERT BURNS.

"Mauchline, 11 June, 1787.

"P.S. The cloot has unfortunately broke, but I have provided a fine buffaloe horn, on which I am going to affix the same cypher which you will remember was on the lid of the cloot. R. B."

began to betray her; and as I was at that time laid up a cripple in Edinburgh, she was literally turned out of doors; and I wrote to a friend, to shelter her till my return." He came to Mauchline in February 1788, and says, "Jean I found banished, forlorn, destitute, and friendless: I have reconciled her to her fate, and I have reconciled her to her mother:" and he soon after determined on making her his wife. The exact time of Burns' marriage is no where mentioned; but in a letter dated on the 7th of April 1788, he says to Miss Chalmers, "I have lately made some sacrifices, for which, were I *viva voce* with you to paint the situation and recount the circumstances, you would applaud me;" and on the 28th of the same month, he observed to his friend Smith, "I have lately and privately given a bewitching young hussy a matrimonial title to my corpus."*

In June 1788, Burns entered on the farm of Ellisland; but, as the house had to be rebuilt, he passed the summer in a wandering and not very creditable manner, continually riding between Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire; and often spending a night on the road, fell into company which made him forget the good resolutions he had formed.

On settling at Ellisland, he expressed himself in terms of great satisfaction at his marriage; and as his wife, whose conduct to her husband under many severe trials, was truly exemplary, has been often alluded to, Burns' account of her, shortly after their union, ought not to be omitted.

* Vide the poem "To James Smith," and note, vol. i. p. 68.

“The most placid goodnature and sweetness of disposition ; a warm heart, gratefully devoted with all its powers to love me ; vigorous health and sprightly cheerfulness, set off to the best advantage by a more than commonly handsome figure ; these, I think, in a woman, may make a good wife, though she should never have read a page but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, nor danced in a brighter assembly than a penny-pay wedding” “To jealousy or infidelity I am an equal stranger ; my preservative from the first, is the most thorough consciousness of her sentiments of honour, and her attachment to me ; my antidote against the last, is my long and deep-rooted affection for her. In housewife matters, of aptness to learn, and activity to execute, she is eminently mistress ; and during my absence in Nithsdale, she is regularly and constantly an apprentice to my mother and sisters in their dairy, and other rural business” . . . “You are right, that a bachelor state would have ensured me more friends ; but from a cause you will easily guess, conscious peace in the enjoyment of my own mind, and unmistrusting confidence in approaching my God, would seldom have been of the number.” His poetical descriptions of her, written about the same time, are inserted in their proper places in the following volumes.

The period passed at Ellisland was the happiest, and perhaps the happiest because the most virtuous, of the Poet's life. His farm not succeeding so well as he expected, he gladly availed himself of his commission in the excise to increase

his income; but the duties exposed him to temptations, which of all men living he was the least able to withstand. The farm became more and more neglected; and his reputation and convivial qualities rendering him an object of universal attraction, his intentions to reform his conduct speedily vanished. He abandoned Ellisland; and having obtained a slight addition to his salary, removed to the town of Dumfries in January 1792.

From this time until his death little can be said of Burns which it is agreeable to an admirer of his genius to record; and to avoid dwelling on a melancholy theme, it will only be observed, that his nights were often devoted to intemperance, and his days to remorse. Except that he performed his official duties with propriety, there are few circumstances that redound to his credit. His politics (for at that time even the opinions of an humble excise officer were thought worthy of attention) were suspected, in consequence of an imprudent toast, and the foolish and unjustifiable present to the French convention of some guns that had been taken in a smuggler; and it required all his interest to retain his situation. His letter to Mr. Graham on this occasion is highly creditable to his feelings as a husband and a father:

“December, 1792.

“SIR, I have been surprised, confounded, and distracted, by Mr. Mitchell, the collector, telling me, that he has received an order from your board to inquire into my political conduct, and blaming

me as a person disaffected to government. Sir, you are a husband and a father. You know what you would feel to see the much-loved wife of your bosom, and your helpless, prattling little ones, turned adrift into the world ; degraded and disgraced from a situation in which they had been respectable and respected, and left almost without the necessary support of a miserable existence. Alas ! Sir, must I think that such soon must be my lot ? and from the damned dark insinuations of hellish, groundless envy, too ? I believe, Sir, I may aver it, and in the sight of Omniscience, that I would not tell a deliberate falsehood, no, not though even worse horrors, if worse can be, than those I have mentioned, hung over my head. And I say, that the allegation, whatever villain has made it, is a lie. To the British constitution, on revolution['] principles, next after my God, I am most devoutly attached. You, Sir, have been much and generously my friend. Heaven knows how warmly I have felt the obligation, and how gratefully I have thanked you. Fortune, Sir, has made you powerful, and me impotent ; has given you patronage, and me dependence. I would not, for my single self, call on your humanity ; were such my insular, unconnected situation, I would disperse the tear that now swells in my eye ; I could brave misfortune ; I could face ruin ; at the worst, ' death's thousand doors stand open.' But, good God ! the tender concerns that I have mentioned, the claims and ties that I see at this moment, and feel around me, how they unnerve courage, and wither resolution ! To your patron-

age, as a man of some genius, you have allowed me a claim ; and your esteem as an honest man, I know is my due. To these, Sir, permit me to appeal. By these may I adjure you to save me from that misery which threatens to overwhelm me ; and which, with my latest breath, I will say I have not deserved."

On the formation of the Dumfries Volunteers, Burns enrolled his name ; and stimulated their loyalty by writing some of his heart-stirring songs, among which was "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled." Though heavily pressed by poverty, the Poet refused the offer of a salary to write for a paper opposed to the government ; and these facts are not to be reconciled with the notion that he was really disaffected or disloyal, while his answer to the proposition about the newspaper, is another proof of the sturdy independence of his character. His last literary exertions were his beautiful contributions to Mr. Thomson's collection of Scottish Songs, which he undertook in September 1792, and for which, with romantic generosity, he refused all remuneration.

From that time, little is known, or at least published, about him. Few of his letters, comparatively with earlier periods of his life, are preserved ; and the glimmering which they afford excites no wish that a stronger light should be thrown on his conduct. Towards the end of 1795, his health had gradually declined ; and at the beginning of 1796 he was labouring under an accumulation of worldly calamities—sickness, sorrow, and debt.

His natural irritability had increased with his illness; and his last letters show the excitement under which he laboured. The loss of his only daughter and darling child,* who died in the autumn of 1795, augmented his wretchedness; and aware of the critical state of his health, he thus feelingly alludes to his situation, in a letter to his friend Mrs. Dunlop:

“15th December, 1795.

“There had much need be many pleasures annexed to the states of husband and father, for, God knows, they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours these ties frequently give me. I see a train of helpless little folks; me and my exertions all their stay; and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang! If I am nipt off at the command of fate—even in all the vigour of manhood as I am, such things happen every day—gracious God! what would become of my little flock! ’Tis here that I envy your people of fortune. A father on his death-bed, taking an everlasting leave of his children, has indeed woe enough; but the man of competent fortune leaves his sons and daughters independency and friends; while I—but I shall run distracted if I think any longer on the subject.”

In January 1796, he was attacked by a severe rheumatic fever, during which he says, “long the die spun doubtful;” and before he was perfectly

* See the “Epitaph on the Poet’s daughter,” and Letter to Mrs. Dunlop on the occasion, given in the note.

convalescent, he imprudently accepted an invitation to a tavern dinner, became much intoxicated, and fell asleep on the snow when returning home. The effect of such an accident on a frame already debilitated may be imagined. He daily grew worse, and soon became sensible of the awful event that was so close at hand. As a last chance, he was ordered to try the effect of sea-bathing, the universal panacea of country practitioners of his day, which in all probability accelerated his fate, and early in July he went to Brow, a village on the banks of the Solway, in Annandale.

At Brow, he received great attention from his friend, Mrs. Riddel, of Glenriddel, who did every thing in her power to contribute to his comfort. Her carriage conveyed him to her residence on the 5th of July, and the account which she has given of the interview is extremely affecting :

“I was struck with his appearance on entering the room. The stamp of death was impressed on his features. He seemed already touching the brink of eternity. His first salutation was, ‘Well, madam, have you any commands for the other world?’ I replied that it seemed a doubtful case which of us should be there soonest, and that I hoped he would yet live to write my epitaph. (I was then in a poor state of health.) He looked in my face with an air of great kindness, and expressed his concern at seeing me look so ill, with his accustomed sensibility. At table he ate little or nothing, and he complained of having entirely lost the tone of his stomach. We had a long and serious conversation about his present situation,

and the approaching termination of all his earthly prospects. He spoke of his death without any of the ostentation of philosophy, but with firmness as well as feeling—as an event likely to happen very soon, and which gave him concern chiefly from leaving his four children so young and unprotected, and his wife in so interesting a situation—in hourly expectation of lying-in of a fifth. He mentioned, with seeming pride and satisfaction, the promising genius of his eldest son, and the flattering marks of approbation he had received from his teachers, and dwelt particularly on his hopes of that boy's future conduct and merit. His anxiety for his family seemed to hang heavy upon him, and the more perhaps from the reflection that he had not done them all the justice he was so well qualified to do. Passing from this subject, he showed great concern about the care of his literary fame, and particularly the publication of his posthumous works. He said he was well aware that his death would occasion some noise, and that every scrap of his writing would be revived against him to the injury of his future reputation: that letters and verses written with unguarded and improper freedom, and which he earnestly wished to have buried in oblivion, would be handed about by idle vanity or malevolence, when no dread of his resentment would restrain them, or prevent the censures of shrill-tongued malice, or the insidious sarcasms of envy, from pouring forth all their venom to blast his fame. He lamented that he had written many epigrams on persons against whom he entertained

no enmity, and whose characters he should be sorry to wound; and many indifferent poetical pieces, which he feared would now, with all their imperfections on their head, be thrust upon the world. On this account he deeply regretted having deferred to put his papers into a state of arrangement, as he was now quite incapable of that exertion.—The conversation was kept up with great evenness and animation on his side. I have seldom seen his mind greater or more collected. There was frequently a considerable degree of vivacity in his sallies, and they would probably have had a greater share, had not the concern and dejection I could not disguise, damped the spirit of pleasantry he seemed not unwilling to indulge.—We parted about sun-set on the evening of that day (the 5th of July, 1796); the next day I saw him again, and we parted to meet no more!”

On the 7th of July, he wrote: “Alas! my friend, I fear the voice of the bard will soon be heard among you no more. For these eight or ten months I have been ailing, sometimes bed-fast and sometimes not; but these last three months I have been tortured with an excruciating rheumatism, which has reduced me to nearly the last stage. You actually would not know me if you saw me—pale, emaciated, and so feeble, as occasionally to need help from my chair.—My spirits fled! fled! But I can no more on the subject.”

His end was now fast approaching; and it is painful to reflect that his latter days were passed in miserable poverty, if not absolute want. On the 12th of July 1796, only a fortnight before his

death, his necessities compelled him to write to Mr. Thomson (whose repeated offers to pay him for his contributions he had previously declined), in the following words: "After all my boasted independence, cursed necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel haberdasher,* to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness: but the horrors of a jail have put me half distracted.—I do not ask this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds' worth of the neatest song genius you have ever seen."

He also wrote on the same day to his cousin, Mr. James Burness, of Montrose:

"12th July, 1796.

"My dearest Cousin,

"When you offered me money assistance, little did I think I should want it so soon. A rascal of a haberdasher, to whom I owe a considerable bill, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process against me, and will infallibly put my emaciated body into jail. Will you be so good as to accommodate me, and that by return of post, with ten pounds? O, James, did you know the pride of my heart, you would feel doubly for me! Alas I am not used to beg! The

* Mr. Allan Cunningham says the debt was contracted for his uniform of the Dumfries Volunteers

worst of it is, my health was coming about finely. You know, and my physicians assure me, that melancholy and low spirits are half my disease; guess, then, my horrors since this business began. If I had it settled, I would be, I think, quite well in a manner. How shall I use this language to you? O, do not disappoint me! but strong necessity's curst command! Forgive me for once more mentioning by return of post. Save me from the horrors of a jail! I do not know what I have written. The subject is so horrible, I dare not look it over again."

Despairing of benefit from the sea, he returned to his family at Dumfries, on the 18th of July; and the anxious solicitude of the inhabitants of that town in the fate of their Poet must have been peculiarly consoling to him. Mr. Allan Cunningham, who saw him arrive, says, "Dumfries was like a besieged place. It was known he was dying, and the anxiety, not of the rich and the learned only, but of the mechanics and peasants, exceeded all belief. Wherever two or three people stood together, their talk was of Burns, and of him alone. They spoke of his history—of his person—of his works—of his family—of his fame—and of his untimely and approaching fate, with a warmth and an enthusiasm which will ever endear Dumfries to my remembrance. All that he said or was saying—the opinions of the physicians (and Maxwell was a kind and a skilful one), were eagerly caught up and reported from street to street, and from house to house."

Though conscious that he was dying, "his good

humour," Mr. Cunningham adds, "was unruffled, and his wit never forsook him. He looked to one of his brother volunteers with a smile, as he stood by the bedside with his eyes wet, and said, 'John, don't let the awkward squad fire over me.' He repressed the hopes of his friends, and told them he had lived long enough. As his life drew near a close, the eager, yet decorous solicitude of his fellow-townsmen increased. It is the practice of the young men of Dumfries to meet in the streets during the hours of remission from labour, and by these means I had an opportunity of witnessing the general solicitude of all ranks and of all ages. His differences with them on some important points were forgotten and forgiven; they thought only of his genius—of the delight his compositions had diffused—and they talked of him with the same awe as of some departing spirit, whose voice was to gladden them no more."*

His last hours are thus described: After his return from Brow, a tremour pervaded his frame, and his tongue became parched. His mind, when not roused by conversation, sunk into delirium, and his powers gradually became exhausted. On the second and third day the fever increased, and his strength diminished, and on the fourth, July 21st, 1796, he died.

"I went to see him laid out for the grave," says Mr. Allan Cunningham; "several elder

* In the London Magazine, 1824. Article "Robert Burns and Lord Byron." Many but not all of these anecdotes of Burns' death-bed also occur in Mr. Cunningham's *Life of the Poet*.

people were with me. He lay in a plain unadorned coffin, with a linen sheet drawn over his face, and on the bed, and around the body, herbs and flowers were thickly strewn, according to the usage of the country. He was wasted somewhat by long illness; but death had not increased the swarthy hue of his face, which was uncommonly dark and deeply marked—his broad and open brow was pale and serene, and around it his sable hair lay in masses, slightly touched with grey. The room where he lay was plain and neat, and the simplicity of the poet's humble dwelling pressed the presence of death more closely on the heart than if his bier had been embellished by vanity, and covered with the blazonry of high ancestry and rank. We stood and gazed on him in silence for the space of several minutes—we went, and others succeeded us—not a whisper was heard. This was several days after his death.”

On the 25th of July, Burns' remains were conveyed to the Trades' Hall, where they lay until the next morning. His comrades, the volunteers of Dumfries, resolved that he should be buried with military honours, and the chief persons of the town and neighbourhood joined the procession. The streets were lined by the Fencible Infantry of Angus-shire and the cavalry of the Cinque Ports, which were then quartered in the neighbourhood; and though their commander, the late Earl of Liverpool, had always refused to know Burns personally, he officiated as one of the mourners. Mr. Allan Cunningham, who was present at Burns' funeral, has thus described it:

“The multitude who accompanied Burns to the grave might amount to ten or twelve thousand. Not a word was heard. . . . It was an impressive and mournful sight to see men of all ranks, and persuasions, and opinions, mingling as brothers, and stepping side by side down the streets of Dumfries, with the remains of him who had sung of their loves and joys and domestic endearments, with a truth and a tenderness which none perhaps have since equalled. I could, indeed, have wished the military part of the procession away. The scarlet and gold—the banners displayed—the measured step, and the military array—with the sounds of martial instruments of music, had no share in increasing the solemnity of the burial scene, and had no connexion with the Poet. I looked on it then, and I consider it now, as an idle ostentation, a piece of superfluous state, which might have been spared, more especially as his neglected, and traduced, and insulted spirit had experienced no kindness in the body from those lofty people who are now proud of being numbered as his coevals and countrymen. . . . I found myself at the brink of the poet’s grave, into which he was about to descend for ever. There was a pause among the mourners, as if loath to part with his remains; and when he was at last lowered, and the first shovelful of earth sounded on his coffin-lid, I looked up and saw tears on many cheeks where tears were not usual. The volunteers justified the fears of their comrade, by three ragged and straggling volleys. The earth was heaped up, the green sod laid over him, and the

multitudes stood gazing on the grave for some minutes' space, and then melted silently away. The day was a fine one, the sun was almost without a cloud, and not a drop of rain fell from dawn to twilight. I notice this, not from any concurrence in the common superstition, that 'happy is the corpse which the rain rains on,' but to confute the pious fraud of a religious magazine, which made heaven express its wrath, at the interment of a profane poet, in thunder, in lightning, and in rain."

The birth of Burns was attended by an unusual circumstance, and one not less remarkable occurred at his death. During the ceremony of the funeral his widow was taken in labour, and delivered of a son, who did not long survive. Of Mrs. Burns, after her confinement, Mr. Cunningham observes:—"A weeping widow and four helpless sons; they came into the streets in their mournings, and public sympathy was awakened afresh. I shall never forget the looks of his boys, and the compassion which they excited. The Poet's life had not been without errors, and such errors too as a wife is slow in forgiving; but he was honoured then, and is honoured now, by the unalienable affection of his wife; and the world repays her prudence and her love by its regard and esteem."

Although a report prevailed that a monument was to be erected to Burns shortly after his decease, the design was not carried into execution until 1813, when a public subscription was opened, and many contributions being received, a mauso-

leum was erected on the most elevated part of Dumfries Churchyard. His remains were removed* to it on the 5th of June 1815, and few strangers go to that part of Scotland without showing their veneration for the Poet by visiting his tomb. The inscription placed on it, instead of being in the language of his native land, with which his name is identified, is, with singular bad taste, in Latin, which he says was “a fountain shut up and a book sealed” from him :

IN AETERNUM HONOREM
ROBERTI BURNS
POETARUM CALEDONIAE SUI AEVI LONGE PRINCIPIS
CUJUS CARMINA EXIMIA PATRIO SERMONE SCRIPTA
ANIMA MAGIS ARDENTIS VIQUE INGENII
QUAM ARTE VEL CULTU CONSPICUA
FACETIIS JUCUNDITATE LEPORE AFFLUENTIA
OMNIBUS LITTERARUM CULTORIBUS SATIS NOTA
CIVES SUI NECNON FLERIQUE OMNES
MUSARUM AMANTISSIMI MEMORIAMQUE VIRI
ARTE POETICA TAM PRAECLARI FOVENTES
HOC MAUSOLEUM
SUPER RELIQUIAS POETAE MORTALES
EXTRUENDUM CURAVERE
PRIMUM HUIUS AEDIFICII LAPIDEM
GULIELMUS MILLER ARMIGER
REIPUBLICAE ARCHITECTONICAE APUD SCOTOS
IN REGIONE AUSTRALI CURIO MAXIMUS PROVINCIALIS
GEORGIO TERTIO REGNANTE
GEORGIO WALLIARUM PRINCIPE
SUMMAM IMPERII PRO PATRE TENENTE
JOSEPHO GASS ARMIGERO DUMFRISIAE PRAEFECTO
THOMA F. HUNT LONDINENSI ARCHITECTO
POSUIT
NONIS JUNII ANNO LUCIS MDCCCXV
SALUTIS HUMANAE MDCCCXV.

* Mr. Lockhart says, “The original tombstone of Burns

A far better epitaph would have been found in the one⁹ he wrote for himself, than which nothing could be imagined more simple or more true :

“ The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
 And softer flame,
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
 And stain’d his name.”

A subscription for the benefit of the Poet's family was commenced immediately after his death. Seven hundred pounds were collected in Scotland and England, and an addition was received from India, which, with the profits of Dr. Currie's edition of his works, formed a considerable amount. To the honour of a nobleman, William, the late Lord Panmure, it must be observed, that he allowed the Poet's widow £100 per annum, until the circumstances of her sons rendered his bounty unnecessary. His sons were, consequently, well educated; and Mrs. Burns resided in the house where her husband died, in a street which the Dumfries' magistracy have, with great propriety, named “ Burns' Street.” She died on the 26th of March 1834, in the seventieth year of her age,

was sunk under the pavement of the mausoleum; and the grave which first received his remains is now occupied, according to her own dying request, by a daughter of Mrs. Dunlop.—A nobler statue of Burns, by Flaxman (the subscription for which began among the Scotch gentlemen at Bombay), is now about to be erected in Edinburgh—and, I am assured, in the library of the University.”—*Life of Burns*, 1829.

and on the 1st of April was buried with her husband.*

Of the four surviving sons of the Poet, Robert, the eldest, was placed in the Stamp Office, London; Francis Wallace, the second, died in 1803; William Nicol is now [1839] Major of the 7th Regiment of Madras Native Infantry; and James Glencairn, the youngest, is a Captain in the 3rd Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry. Captain Burns, as soon as his circumstances permitted, settled a liberal annuity on his mother.

Gilbert, the admirable brother of the Poet, survived till the 27th of April 1827. He removed from Mossgiel shortly after the death of Burns, to a farm in Dumfriesshire, carrying with him his aged mother, who died under his roof.

Of Burns' person and manners the best idea will be conveyed by the description of those who knew him. Professor Walker, who met him when he first came to Edinburgh, says,—“His person, though strong, and well knit, and much superior to what might be expected in a ploughman, was still rather coarse in its outline. His stature, from want of setting up, appeared to be only of the middle size, but was rather above it. His

* Mr. Allan Cunningham has obligingly informed the Editor, that before Mrs. Burns was buried, the body of the Poet was disinterred, his skull examined, and a cast taken of it, and that it was then placed in a box lined with the softest materials, and restored to the tomb. As this was the *second time* the grave of the Poet had been violated, it may be hoped that it will be the last; and that public decency will not be again outraged to gratify the morbid curiosity of pseudo *savans*.

motions were firm and decided ; and though without any pretensions to grace, were at the same time so free from clownish constraint, as to shew that he had not always been confined to the society of his profession. His countenance was not of that elegant cast which is most frequent among the upper ranks, but it was manly and intelligent, and marked by a thoughtful gravity which shaded at times into sternness. In his large dark eye the most striking index of his genius resided. It was full of mind ; and would have been singularly expressive under the management of one who could employ it with more art, for the purpose of expression."

Sir Walter Scott, who, when very young, met Burns once at Professor Ferguson's, observes :—
" His person was strong and robust ; his manners rustic, not clownish ; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect, perhaps, from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture, but to me it conveys the idea, that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, i. e. none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the douce gudeman who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments ; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament.

It was large and of a dark cast, which glowed, I say literally glowed, when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty."

The character of the Poet may be described in few words. He was generous, ambitious, and susceptible of the loftiest aspirations, and scorned the appearance even of meanness. Disposed to rate his own merits extremely high, and persuaded that genius, rather than birth or fortune, should command respect, he could ill endure the inferior station in life to which fate had consigned him. He was consequently liable to imagine offence where none was intended, and was accustomed to scrutinize the motives of those with whom he came in contact. Kindness from superiors was often construed into superciliousness, and attention from his equals into servility. This disposition, united to an irritable temperament, rendered him jealous and unhappy; and, together with the most turbulent and unruly passions, ill fitted him for a domestic life. His early habits rendered good society a restraint, and access to it was not always in his power; but society and excitement of some

kind were indispensable to his existence; and it is a subject of regret rather than of surprise that he should have sought the bottle and the companionship of some jovial persons in his neighbourhood, as a relief from reflections that preyed on his heart. The result was what might be expected. Indulgence at first rare, daily became more frequent, and at length habitual. The pangs of remorse,—that curse of noble minds,—increased the ravages of dissipation, and soon brought their victim to a premature, if not dishonourable grave.

Much has been said on the disgrace reflected on persons in power and affluence, from having allowed Burns to die in so humble a condition, and in poverty. But these observations, though springing from a generous admiration of the Bard, are not strictly just, and being liable to create expectations in future writers that cannot, from the nature of things in this country, be realized, are likely to tend to disappointment and discontent. The only patronage to which an author in England can safely direct his hopes, is that of the *public*, shown by their applause, and by the demand for his works. Of this Burns shared largely; and it would seem from the preface to the first edition of his Poems, that to it alone did he aspire, for he proudly says, “he found Poetry its own reward.” Few writers have been more honoured by their contemporaries; and the profits arising from the sale of his works, considering their extent, and the slight remuneration then given for literary labour, were immense. If he had chosen,

he might have received payment for his other productions, and had he devoted the hours spent at taverns to his pen, his income would have been still further increased.

The only other sources of patronage are, private benevolence and public employments. The former Burns would, it is certain, have treated with contempt, for it is not likely that he would have condescended to be the pensioner of any man; and with regard to the latter, to which his biographers more particularly allude, it must be asked, was he at the time when he was brought into notice, from his habits of life, and fondness for the society of persons of his own class, suited for a much higher office than that which his intimate friends, who must have known his character best suggested, and with which he often expressed himself perfectly contented? Though the author of unrivalled poems, there is no proof of his fitness for a higher official appointment when he first came to Edinburgh; and after that period, his irregular life and imprudent conduct, render it unlikely that he should have been patronized by a government alive to the slightest appearance of disaffection in its servants. They, however, who wish the flights of a high minded Bard, and above all, such a man as Burns, to be influenced by the hopes of Court favour, or checked by the fear of losing a Government sinecure, pay but a poor compliment to his fame.

There is testimony that, as a father, Burns performed his duties in a creditable manner; and that he should have loved his children with all

a father's affection was quite consistent with his nature.

Thus, in his character, like that of most other men, there was a mixture of good and evil. It is, however, deeply to be regretted, that his errors so much preponderated as to render him a beacon rather than an example; that he should afford another, to the many proofs, that genius alone cannot confer happiness or secure esteem; and that talents, however splendid, if unaccompanied by prudence and virtue, are a dangerous, rather than an enviable possession.

Of the Poetry of Burns it is scarcely necessary to speak. It is, and ever will be, popular, because it describes Nature in the only language in which Nature should be represented, that of simplicity and truth. Unskilled in the mechanism of his art, he followed the suggestions of his own fancy, "singing the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language;" and until some mighty change shall have altered the appearance of the natural world, as well as the heart and feelings of man, his productions must retain their charms. On his own countrymen, they possess an effect almost magical; and in whatever quarter of the Globe his Songs may be sung, or his Verses recited, they revive the remembrance of Scotland, with all her endearing associations, in a manner which is universally felt, but cannot be adequately described. With such claims to immortality, Burns' fame stands on an imperishable basis; and that fondest wish of the Bard,

which to his “latest hour” animated his breast,
has been fully realized,

“That I for poor auld Scotland’s sake,
Some useful plan, or BEUK could make,
Or sing a Song at least.”





PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION,

PRINTED AT KILMARNOCK IN 1786, BUT OMITTED
IN ALL SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS.

THE following trifles are not the production of the Poet who, with all the advantages of learned art, and, perhaps, amid the elegances and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the Author of this, these, and other celebrated names their countrymen are, at least in their original language, *a fountain shut up, and a book sealed*. Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a rhymers from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulses of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think any thing of his worth showing; and none of the following works were ever composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little

creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind—these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found Poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an Author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as ‘an impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and, because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scotch rhymes together, looking upon himself as a poet of no small consequence forsooth!’

It is an observation of that celebrated poet, Shenstone, whose divine elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species, that “HUMILITY has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!” If any critic catches at the word GENIUS, the Author tells him, once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done would be a manœuvre below the worst character which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawns of the poor unfortunate Fergusson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, declares,

that even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scotch poets - he has often had in his eye in the following pieces ; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation.

To his subscribers the Author returns his most sincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he is indebted to benevolence and friendship, for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life ; but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dulness and nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.





DEDICATION TO THE SECOND EDITION,


PRINTED AT EDINBURGH IN 1787, AND

INSERTED IN ALL SUBSEQUENT

EDITIONS.

TO THE NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN OF
THE CALEDONIAN HUNT.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

 SCOTTISH BARD, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his Country's service—where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his native land ; those who bear the honours and inherit the virtues of their ancestors ? The Poetic Genius of my Country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha—at the PLOUGH ; and threw her inspiring MANTLE over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil, in my native tongue ; I tuned my wild, art-

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less notes as she inspired.—She whispered me to come to this ancient Metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my songs under your honoured protection. I now obey her dictates.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my lords and gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours. That path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this address with the venal soul of a servile Author, looking for a continuation of those favours: I was bred to the plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my Country that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to proffer my warmest wishes to the great Fountain of honour, the Monarch of the universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to waken the Echoes, in the ancient and favourite amusement of your forefathers, may Pleasure ever be of your party, and may social Joy await your return! When harassed in courts or camps with the jostlings of bad men and bad measures, may the honest consciousness of injured worth attend your return to your native Seats; and may domestic Happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May corruption shrink at your kindling indignant glance;

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and may tyranny in the Ruler, and licentiousness
in the People, equally find you an inexorable
foe !

I have the honour to be,
With the sincerest gratitude,
And highest respect,
My Lords and Gentlemen,
Your most devoted humble Servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

Edinburgh,
April 4, 1787.





POEMS,
CHIEFLY SCOTTISH.

THE TWA DOGS.*

A TALE.

T WAS in that place o' Scotland's isle,
'That bears the name o' Auld King
Coil,†
Upon a bonie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

* Mr. Lockhart observes that this Poem owes its existence to the first dawn of patronage with which Burns' fortunes were brightened, as it was written in the interval between the publication of his works being first determined on, and their being sent to press.—*Life of Burns*, p. 93. On the 17th of February, 1786, Burns stated to his friend Mr. John Richmond, "I have completed my Poem on the Dogs, but have not shown it to the world." In a letter from Gilbert Burns to Dr. Currie, dated Mossgiel, 2nd September, 1798, he says, "The *Tale of Twa Dogs* was composed after the resolution of publishing was nearly taken. Robert had had a dog, which he called Luath, that was a great favourite. The

† Coilus, King of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to derive its name.

The first I'll name, they ca'd him Cæsar,
 Was keepit for his Honour's pleasure :
 His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
 Shew'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs ; 10
 But whalpet some place far abroad,
 Whare sailors gang to fish for Cod.

His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar,
 Shew'd him the gentleman and scholar ;
 But tho' he was o' high degree,
 The fient a pride nae pride had he ;
 But wad hae spent an hour caressin,
 Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gipsey's messin.
 At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
 Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie, 20
 But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
 An' stroan't on stanes and hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
 A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
 Wha for his friend and comrade had him,
 And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
 After some dog in Highland sang,*

dog had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person the night before my father's death. Robert said to me, that he should like to confer such immortality as he could bestow upon his old friend Luath, and that he had a great mind to introduce something into the book under the title of 'Stanzas to the Memory of a quadruped Friend;' but this plan was given up for the Tale as it now stands. Cæsar was merely the creature of the poet's imagination, created for the purpose of holding chat with his favourite Luath." The 'factor' was the person into whose hands the affairs of his father fell after his misfortunes. Burns says, in a letter written in 1787, "My indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears."

* Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's Fingal. R. B.

Was made lang syne, Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash an' faithfu' tyke, . . .

As ever lap a sheugh or dike.

30

His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,

Ay gat him friends in ilka place ;

His breast was white, his touzie back

Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black ;

His gawcie tail, wi' upward curl,

Hung owro his hurdies wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,

An' unco pack an' thick thegither ;

Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd and snowket ;

Whyles mice and moudieworts they howket ; 40

Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,

An' worry'd ither in diversion ;

• Till tir'd at last wi' mony a farce,

They sat them down upon their a—,¹

An' there began a lang digression

About the lords o' the creation.

CÆSAR.

I've aften wonder'd, honest Luath,

What sort o' life poor dogs like you have ;

An' when the gentry's life I saw,

What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

50

Our Laird gets in his racked rents,

His coals, his kain, an' a' his stents :

He rises when he likes himsel ;

His flunkies answer at the bell ;

He ca's his coach ; he ca's his horse ;

VAR. ¹ Until wi' daffin weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down.

Till tired at last an' doucer grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down.—MS.

He draws a bonie, silken purse
 As lang's my tail, whare thro' the steeks,
 The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling,
 At baking, roasting, frying, boiling ;
 An' tho' the gentry first are stechin,
 Yet ev'n the ha' folk fill their pechan
 Wi' sauce, ragouts, and such like trashtrie,
 That's little short o' downright wastrie.
 Our Whipper-in, wee blastit wonner,
 Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
 Better than ony tenant man
 His Honour has in a' the lan :
 An' what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
 I own it's past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't eneugh ;
 A cotter howkin in a sheugh,
 Wi' dirty stanes biggin a dyke,
 Baring a quarry, and siclike,
 Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains,
 A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
 An' nought but his han' darg, to keep
 Them right an' tight in thack an' rape.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
 Like loss o' health, or want o' masters,
 Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
 An' they maun starve o' cauld and hunger ;
 But, how it comes, I never kent yet,
 They're maistly wonderfu' contented ;
 An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies,
 Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
 How huff'd, an' cuff'd, an' disrespeckit !
 Lord, man, our gentry care as little
 For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle, 90
 They gang as saucy by poor folk,
 As I wad by a stinking brock.

I've notic'd, on our Laird's court-day,
 An' mony a time my heart's been wao,
 Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
 How they maun thole a factor's snash :
 He'll stamp an' threaten, curse and swear,
 He'll apprehend them, poind their gear ;
 While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
 An' hear it a', an' fear and tremble ! 100

I see how folk live that hae riches :
 But surely poor folk maun be wretches !

LUATH.

They're no sae wretched's ane wad think :
 Tho' constantly on poortith's brink :
 They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
 The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
 They're ay in less or mair provided ;
 An' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
 A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment. 110

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
 Their grushie weans an' faithfu' wives :
 The prattling things are just their pride,
 That sweetens a' their fire-side.

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy

Can mak the bodies unco happy ;
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs :
They'll talk o' patronago an' priests,
Wi' kindling fury i' their breasts, 120
Or tell what new taxation's comin,
An' ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmass returns,
They get the jovial, ranting Kirns,
When rural life, o' ev'ry station,
Unite in common recreation ;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, an' social Mirth
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty wins ; 130
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam ;
The luntin pipe, an' sneeshin mill,
Are handed round wi' right guid will ;
The cantie auld folks crackin crouse,
The young ane's ranting thro' the house,—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.

Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre aften play'd. 140
There's monie a creditable stock
O' decent, honest fawsont folk,
Are riven out baith root an' branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster
In favour wi' some gentle Master,
Wha, aiblins, thrang a parliamentin,
For Britain's guid his saul indontin—

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it ;
 For Britain's guid ! guid faith ! I doubt it. 150
 Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him,
 An' saying aye or no's they bid him :
 At operas an' plays parading,
 Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading :
 Or maybe, in a frolic daft,
 To Hague or Calais taks a waft,
 To make a tour, an' tak a whirl,
 To learn *bon ton* an' see the worl'.
 There, at Vienna or Versailles,
 He rives his father's auld entails ; 160
 Or by Madrid he taks the rout,
 To thrum guitars, an' fecht wi' nowt ;
 Or down Italian vista startles,
 Whore-hunting amang groves o' myrtles :
 Then bouses drumly German water,
 To mak himsel look fair and fatter,
 An' clear the consequential sorrows,
 Love-gifts of Carnival Signoras.
 For Britain's guid ! for her destruction !
 Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction ! 170

LUATH.

Hech, man ! dear sirs ! is that the gate
 They waste sae mony a braw estate !
 Are we sae foughten an' harass'd
 For gear to gang that gate at last ?
 O would they stay aback frae courts,
 An' please themsels wi' countra sports,
 It wad for ev'ry ane be better,

The Laird, the Tenant, an' the Cotter !
 For thae frank, rantin, ramblin billies,
 Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows ; 180
 Except for breakin o' their timmer,
 Or speakin lightly o' their Limmer,
 Or shootin o' a hare or moor-cock,
 The ne'er-a-bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, Master Cæsar,
 Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure ?
 Nae cauld nor hunger e'er can steer them,
 The vèra thought o't need na fear them.

CÆSAR.

Lord, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
 The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em. 190

It's true, they need na starve or sweat,
 Thro' winter's cauld, or simmer's heat ;
 They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
 An' fill auld age wi' grips an' granes :
 But human bodies are sic fools,
 For a' their colleges and schools,
 That when nae real ills perplex them,
 They mak enow themsels to vex them ,
 An' ay the less they hao to sturt them,
 In like proportion, less will hurt them. 200

A country fellow at the pleugh,
 His acre's till'd, he's right enough ;
 A country girl at her wheel,
 Her dizzen's done, she's unco weel :
 But Gentlemen, an' Ladies warst,
 Wi' ev'n down want o' wark are curst.
 They loiter, lounging, lank, an' lazy ;

Tho' dei^l haet ails them, yet uneasy :
 Their days insipid, dull, an' tasteless ;
 Their nights unquiet, lang, an' restless ; 210

An' ev'n their sports, their balls an' races,
 Their galloping thro' public places,
 There's sic parade, sic pomp, an' art,
 The joy can scarcely reach the heart.

The men cast out in party matches,
 Then sowther a' in deep debauches.
 Ae night, they're mad wi' drink an' whoring,
 Nienst day their life is past enduring.

The Ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
 As great an' gracious a' as sisters ; 220
 But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
 They're a' run deils an' jads thegither.

Whyles, owre the wee bit cup an' platie,
 They sip the scandal potion pretty ;
 Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks,
 Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks ;
 Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
 An' cheat like ony unhang'd blackguard.

There's some exceptions, man an' woman ;
 But this is Gentry's life in common. 230

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
 An' darker gloamin brought the night :
 The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone,
 The kye stood rowtin i' the loan :
 When up they gat, an' shook their lugs,
 Rejoic'd they were na *men* but *dogs* ;
 An' each took aff his several way,
 Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

SCOTCH DRINK.*

Give him strong drink, until he wink,
 That's sinking in despair;
 An' liquor guid to fire his bluid,
 That's prest wi' grief an' care;
 There let him bouse, an' deep carouse,
 Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
 Till he forgets his loves or debts,
 An' minds his griefs no more.

Solomon's Proverbs, xxxi. 6, 7.



LET other Poets raise a fracas
 'Bout vines, an' wines, an' drunken
 Bacchus,
 An' crabbit names an' stories wrack us.

An' grate our lug,
 I sing the juice Scotch bear can mak us,
 In glass or jug.

O thou, my Muse! guid auld Scotch Drink,
 Whether thro' wimplin worms thou jink,
 Or, richly brown, ream owre the brink,
 In glorious faem,

10

Inspire me, till I lisp an' wink,
 To sing thy name!

Let husky Wheat the haughs adorn,
 An' Aits set up their awnie horn,
 An' Pease an' Beans at een or morn,

* It appears from Burns' letter to Mr. John Richmond, dated Mossiel, 17th February, 1786, that this poem was written about that time. On the 20th of March following he said to Mr. Robert Muir, "I here enclose you my 'Scotch Drink.' I hope, some time before we hear the gowk, to have the pleasure of seeing you at Kilmarnock, when I intend we shall have a gill between us in a mutchkin stoup."

Perfume the plain,
Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn,
'Thou King o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones, the wale o' food! 20
Or tumblin in the boiling flood
Wi' kail an' beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame; an' keeps us livin';
Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin',
When heavy-dragg'd wi' pine an' grievin';
But oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down-hill, serievin',
Wi' rattlin glee. 30

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear:
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair,
At's weary toil:
Thou even brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft, clad in massy, siller weed,
Wi' Gentles thou ereets thy head;
Yet humbly kind, in time o' need,
The poor man's wine, 40
His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairs and rants?

Ev'n godly meetings o' the saunts,
 By thee inspir'd,
 When gaping they besiege the tents,
 Are doubly fir'd.

That merry night we get the corn in,
 O sweetly, then, thou reams the horn in ! 50
 Or reekin on a New-year mornin
 In cog or bicker,
 An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,
 An' gusty sucker !

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
 An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
 O rare ! to see thee fizz an' freath
 I' th' lugget caup !
 Then Burnewin* comes on like Death
 At ev'ry chaup. 60

Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel ;
 The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel,
 Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
 The strong forehammer,
 Till block an' studdie ring an' reel
 Wi' dinsome clamour.

When skirlin weanies see the light,
 Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,
 How fumblin cuifs their dearies slight,
 Wae worth the name !¹ 70

VAR. ¹ Wae worth them for't !
 While healths gae round to him, wha tight,
 Gies famous sport.—1st Edit.

* Burnewin—burn-the-wind—the Blacksmith.

Nae Howdie gets a social night,
Or plack frae them.

When neebors anger at a plea,
An' just as wud as wud can be,
How easy can the barley-bree
Cement the quarrel !
It's aye the cheapest Lawyer's fee,
To taste the barrel !

Alake ! that e'er my Muse has reason
To wyte her countrymen wi' treason ! 80
But monie daily weet their weason
Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly, in a winter's season,
E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that brandy, burning trash !
Fell source o' monie a pain an' brash !
Twins monie a poór, doylt, drucken hash,
O' half his days ;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst faes. 90

Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well,
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor plackless devils like mysel'
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blather wench,
An' gouts torment him, inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch

O' sour disdain, 100
 Out owre a glass o' Whisky punch
 Wi' honest men !

O Whisky ! soul o' plays an' pranks !
 Accept a Bardie's gratefu' thanks !
 When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
 Are my poor verses !
 Thou comes——they rattle i' their ranks
 At ither's a—s !

Thee, Ferintosh ! O sadly lost !
 Scotland, lament frae coast to coast ! 110
 Now colic-grips, an' barkin hoast,
 May kill us a' ;
 For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast
 Is ta'en awa !

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th'. Excise,
 Wha mak the Whisky stells their prize !
 Haud up thy han', Doil ! ance, twice, thrice !
 There, seize the blinkers !
 An' bake them up in brunstane pies
 For poor damn'd drinkers. 120

Fortune ! if thou'll but gie me still
 Hale brecks, a scone, an' Whisky gill,
 An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
 Tak' a' the rest,
 An' deal't about as thy blind skill
 Directs thee best.

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER.*

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND HONOURABLE THE
SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE
OF COMMONS.

Dearest of Distillation! last and best—
—— How art thou lost!——

Parody on Milton.



YE Irish Lords, ye Knights an' Squires,
Wha represent our brughs an' shires,
An' doucely manage our affairs
In Parliament,
To you a simple Bardie's prayers
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roupet Muse is hearse!
Your Honours heart-wi' grief 'twad pierce,
To see her sitten on her a—

Low i' the dust, 10
An' sceriechin out prosaic verse,
An' like to brust!

Tell them whae hae the chief direction,
Scotland an' me's in great affliction,
E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On Aquavitæ;
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

* This was wrote before the Act anent the Scotch Distilleries, of session 1786; for which Scotland and the Author return their most grateful thanks. R. B.

Stand forth, an' tell yon Premier Youth, o
The honest, open, naked truth :

20

Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's drouth,
His servants humble :
The muckle devil blaw ye south,
If ye dissemble !

Does ony great man glunch an' gloom ?
Speak out, an' never fash your thumb !
Let posts an' pensions sink or soom
Wi' them wha grant 'em :
If honestly they canna come,
Far better want 'em.

30

In gath'rin votes you were na slack ;
Now stand as tightly by your tack ;
Ne'er claw your lug, an' fidge your back,
An' hum an' haw ;
But raise your arm, an' tell your crack
Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greetin owre her thrissle ;
Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whissle :
An' damn'd Excisemen in a bussle,
Seizin a Stell,
Triumphant crushin't like a mussel
Or lampit shell.

40

Then on the tither hand present her,
A blackguard Smuggler, right behind her,
An' cheek-for-chow, a chuffie Vintner,
Colleaguin join,
Picking her pouch as bare as Winter
Of a' kind coin.

(Deil na they never mair do guid,
 Play'd her that pliskie !)
 An' now she's like to rin red-wud
 About her Whisky.

An' Lord, if ance they pit her till't,
 Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt,
 An' durk an' pistol at her belt,
 She'll tak the streets,
 An' rin her whittle to the hilt, 100
 I' th' first she meets !

For God sake, Sirs ! then speak her fair,
 An' straik her cannie wi' the hair,
 An' to the muckle house repair,
 Wi' instant speed,
 ' An' strive, wi' a' your wit and lear,
 To get remead.

Yon ill tongu'd tinkler, Charlie Fox,
 May taunt you wi' his jeers an' mocks ; 110
 But gie him't het, my hearty cocks !
 E'en cove the cadie !
 An' send him to his dicing-box
 An' sportin lady.

Tell yon guid bluid o' auld Boconnock's
 I'll be his debt twa mashlum bonnocks,
 An' drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's*
 Nine times a-week,

* A worthy old Hostess of the Author's in Mauchline, where he sometimes studies Politics over a glass of guid auld Scotch Drink. R. B. Old Nanse is known to have expressed her surprise at this allusion, saying, "Robert Burns might be a very clever lad, but he certainly was regardless,

If he some scheme like tea an' winnocks,
Wad kindly seek. 120

Could he some commutation broach,
I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
He need na fear their foul reproach
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie queer hotch-potch,
The Coalition.

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue ;
She's just a devil wi' a rung ;
An' if she promise auld or young
To tak their part, 130
Tho' by the neck she should be strung,
She'll no desert.

An' now, ye chosen Five-and-Forty,
May still your Mither's heart support ye ;
Then, though a Minister grow dorty,
An' kick your place,
Ye'll snap your fingers, poor an' hearty,
Before his face.

God bless your Honours a' your days,
Wi' sowps o' kail an' brats o' claise, 140
In spite o' a' the thievish kaes
That haunt St. Jamie's !
Your humble Bardie sings an' prays
While Rab his name is.

for to the best of her belief he had never taken three half mutchkins in her house in all his life."—Lockhart's "Life of Burns," p. 138. Her portrait was taken in 1799 by Brooks, and has been engraved.

POSTSCRIPT.

LET half-starv'd slaves, in warmer skies
 See future wines, rich-clust'ring rise ;
 Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
 But blyth an' frisky,
 She eyes her free-born, martial boys,
 Tak aff their Whisky.

What tho' their Phœbus kinder warms,
 While fragrance blooms an' beauty charms !
 When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
 The scented groves, 10
 Or hounded forth, dishonour arms
 In hungry droves.

Their gun's a burden on their shoulder ;
 They downa bide the stink o' powther ;
 Their bauldest thought's a hank'ring swither
 To stan' or rin,
 Till skelp—a shot—they're aff, a' throwther,
 To save their skin.

But bring a Scotsman frae his hill,
 Clap in his cheek a Highland gill, 20
 Say, such is royal George's will,
 An' there's the foe,
 He has nae thought but how to kill
 Twa at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him :
 Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him ;

Wi' bluidy han'a welcome gies him ;
 An' when he fa's,
 His latest draught o' breathin lea'es him
 In faint huzzas.

30

Sages their solemn een may steek,
An' raise a philosophic reek,
An' physically causes seek,
 In clime an' season;
But tell me Whisky's name in Greek,
 I'll tell the reason.


Scotland, my auld, respected Mither !
 Tho' whyles ye moistify your leather,
 Till whare ye sit, on craps o' heather,
 Ye tine your dam ;
 Freedom and Whisky gang thegither !
 Tak aff your dram !

40

THE HOLY FAIR.*

A robe of seeming truth and trust
 Hid crafty Observation;
 And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
 The dirk of Defamation:
 A mask that like the gorget show'd,
 Dye-varying on the pigeon;
 And for a mantle large and broad,
 He wiapt him in Religion.

Hypocrisy à-la-mode.

PON¹ a simmer Sunday morn,
 When Nature's face is fair,
 I walked forth to view the corn,
 An' snuff the caller air.
 The risin sun, owre Galston muirs,†

VAR. ¹ 'Twas on. MS.

* Holy Fair is a common phrase in the West of Scotland for a sacramental occasion. R. B. "These annual celebrations," says Heron, "had much in them of those old popish festivals, in which superstition, traffic, and amusement, used to be strangely intermingled."

Gilbert Burns observes, "Feigusson, in his 'Hallow Fair of Edinburgh,' I believe, likewise furnished a hint of the title and plan of the 'Holy Fair.' The farcical scene the Poet there describes, was often a favourite field of his observation, and most of the incidents he mentions had actually passed before his eyes." The names in the text are supplied from a copy of the first edition, in which they were written by Burns himself, and the variations are from a copy in his own hand.

David Sillar thus bears testimony to the accuracy of Burns' description of "The Holy Fair:"

"— When ye paint the Holy Fair,
 Ye draw it to a very hair."

† The adjoining parish to Mauchline.

Wi' glorious light was glintin ;
 The hares were hirplin down the furs,
 The lav'rocks they were chantin
 Fu' sweet that day.

As lightsomely I glowr'd abroad, 10
 To see a scene sae gay,
 Threco Hizzies, early at the road,
 Cam skelpin up the way.
 Twa had manteels o' dolefu' black,
 But ane wi' lyart lining ;
 The third, that gaed a wee a-back,
 Was in the fashion shinin
 Fu' gay² that day.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
 In feature, form, an' claes ; 20
 Their visage³ wither'd, lang an' thin,
 An' sour as ony slaes :
 The third cam up, hap-step-an'-lowp,
 As light as ony lambie,
 An' wi' a curchie low did stoop,
 As soon as e'er she saw me,
 Fu' kind that day.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I,⁴ ' Sweet lass,
 ' I think ye seem to ken me ;
 ' I'm sure I've seen that bonie face, 30
 ' But yet I canna name ye.'
 Quo' she, an' laughing as she spak,
 An' taks me by the hauns,

‘Ye, for my sake, hae gi’en⁵ the feck
 ‘Of a’ the ten commauns
 ‘A screed some day.⁶

‘My name is Fun—your cronie dear,
 ‘The nearest friend ye hae;
 ‘An’ this is Superstition here,
 ‘An’ that’s Hypocrisy. 40
 ‘I’m gaun to Mauchline Holy Fair,
 ‘To spend an hour in daffin:
 ‘Gin ye’ll go there, yon runkl’d pair,
 ‘We will get famous laughin
 ‘At them this day.’

Quoth I, ‘With a’ my heart, I’ll do’t;
 ‘I’ll get my Sunday’s sark on,
 ‘An’ meet you on the holy spot;
 ‘Faith, we’s hae fine remarkin!’⁷
 Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time, 50
 An’ soon I made me ready;
 For roads were clad, frae side to side,
 Wi’ monie a wearie bodie,
 In droves that day.

Here, farmers gash, in ridin graith
 Gaed hoddin by their cotters;
 There, swankies young, in braw braid-claith,
 Are springin owre the gutters.

VAR. ⁵ broke. MS. ⁶ By night or day. MS.

⁷ Quothie, I’ll get my tither coat,
 An’ on my Sunday’s sark,
 An’ meet ye in the yard without,
 At op’nin o’ the wark. MS.

The lasses, skelpin barefit, thrang, ' 60
 In silks an' scarlets glitter ;
 Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in monie a whang,
 An' farls, bak'd wi' butter,
 Fu' crump that day.

When by the plate we set our nose,
 Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence,
 A greedy glowr Black Bonnet⁸ throws,
 An' we maun draw our tippence.
 Then in we go to see the show,
 On ev'ry side they're gath'rin,
 Some carryin dails, some chairs an' stools, 70
 An' some are busy bleth'rin
 Right loud that day. c

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs,
 An' screen our countra gentry,
 There, racer Jess,^{9*} an' twa-three whores,
 Are blinkin at ¹⁰ the entry.
 Here sits a raw o' tittlin jades,
 Wi' heaving breast an' bare neck,
 An' there, a batch o' wabster lads,¹¹
 Blackguarding frae Kilmarnock 80
 For fun this day.

Here, some are thinkin on their sins,
 An' some upo' ¹² their clacs ;

VAR. ⁸ the Elder. MS.

⁹ Bet B — r there.

¹⁰ Sit blinkin in. MS.

¹¹ brawds.

¹² An' ithers on. MS.

* Racer Jess was Janet Gibson, a half-witted daughter of Nansie Tinnock, of "The Scotch Drink," note p. 19, ante. She died at Mauchline, in January or February, 1813.

Ane cūses feet that fyl'd his shins,
 Anither sighs an' prays:
 On this hand sits a chosen¹³ swatch,
 Wi' screw'd up, grace-proud¹⁴ faces;
 On that, a set o' chaps, at¹⁵ watch,
 Thrang winkin on the lasses
 To chairs that day. 90

O happy is that man an' blest!
 Nae wonder that it pride him!
 Wha's ain dear lass, that he likes¹⁶ best,
 Comes clinkin down beside him!
 Wi' arm repos'd on the chair-back,
 He sweetly does compose him;
 Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
 An's loof upon her bosom
 Unkend that day.

Now a'¹⁷ the congregation o'er 100
 Is silent¹⁸ expectation;
 For Moodie* speels¹⁹ the holy door,
 Wi' tidings o' damnation.†

VAR. ¹³ an elect. 1st Edit. a goodly. MS.

¹⁴ Wi' mercy beggin'. MS.

¹⁵ on. MS.

¹⁶ loves. MS.

¹⁷ But now. MS.

¹⁸ hush't in. MS.

¹⁹ Sawnie climbs

* Mr. Moodie, Minister at Riccarton. Burns' MS. John Russel, or as the Poet calls him, "Black Russel," and "Black Jock," then Minister at Kilmainock, and afterwards of Stirling, is another of the persons alluded to. See p. 31.

† "Salvation" in the first edition, but altered in the second, at the suggestion of Dr. Blair. Burns, with great want of tact, insisted on acknowledging the obligation in a note.—Lockhart's "Life of Burns," p. 135.

Should Hornie, as in ancient days, ⁰
 'Mang sons o' God present him,
 The vera sight o' Moodie's²⁰ face,
 To's ain het hame²¹ had sent him
 Wi' fright that day.

Hear how he clears the points o' faith
 Wi' rattlin an' wi' thumpin ! 110
 Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
 He's stampin an' he's jumpin !
 His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,
 His eldritch squeel an' gestures,
 O how they fire the heart devout,
 Like cantharidian plasters,
 On sic a day !

But, hark ! the tent has chang'd its voice ;
 There's peace an' rest nae langer :
 For a' the real judges rise, 120
 They canna sit for anger.
 Smith* opens²² out his cauld harangues,
 On practice and on ²³ morals ;
 An' aff the godly pour in thrangs,
 To gie the jars an' barrels
 A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine
 Of moral pow'rs an' reason ?²⁴

VAR. ²⁰ Sawnie's. ²¹ Tae H—ll wi' speed.

²² Georgie begins. MS. ²³ off.

²⁴ It's no nae Gospel truth divine
 Tae cant o' sense an' reason. MS.

* George Smith at Galston. MS.

His English style, an' gesture fine,
 Are a' clean out o' season. 130
 Like Socrates or Antonino,
 Or some auld pagan²⁵ Heathen,
 The moral man he does define,
 But ne'er a word o' faith in
 That's right that day.

In guid time comes an antidote
 Against sic poison'd nostrum ;
 For Peebles,* frae the water-fit,²⁶
 Ascends the holy rostrum :
 See, up he's got the word o' God 140
 An' meek an' mim has view'd it,
 While Common Sense has ta'en the road,
 An' aff, an' up the Cowgate†
 Fast, fast, that day.

Wee Miller,‡ neist, the Guard relieves,
 An' Orthodoxy raibles,
 Tho' in his heart he weel believes,
 An' thinks it auld wives' fables :
 But, faith ! the birkie wants a Manse,
 So, cannilie he hums them ; 150
 Altho' his carnal wit an' sense
 Like hafflins-wise o'ercomes him
 At times that day.

VAR. ²⁵ Wicket. MS. ²⁶ For sairy Willy water-fit.

* Minister of Newtown of Air.

† A street so called, which faces the *tent* in [Mauchline.]
 R. B.

‡ Assistant preacher at Auchenleck.

Now, butt an' ben, the Change-housé fills,

Wi' yill-caup Commentators :

Here's crying out for bakes an' gills,

An' there the pint-stowp clatters ;

While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang.

Wi' logic, an' wi' Scripture,

They raise a din, that in the end,

160

Is like to breed a rupture

O' wrath that day.

Lecze me on Drink ! it gi'es us mair

Than either School or Colledge :

It kindles Wit, it waukens Lair,

It pangs us fou o' Knowledge.

Be't whisky gill, or penny wheep,

Or ony stronger potion,

It never fails, on drinkin' deep,

To kittle up our notion

170

By night or day.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent

To mind baith saul an' body,²⁷

Sit round the table, weel content,

An' steer about the toddy.²⁸

On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,

They're makin observations ;

While some are cozie i' the neuk,

An' formin assignations

To meet some day.

180

But now the Lord's ain trumpet touts,

Till a' the hills are rairin,

VAR. ²⁷ Their lowan drowth tae quench. MS.

²⁸ punch. MS.

An' echoes back return the shouts ;
 Black Russel²⁹* is na spairin :
 His piercing words, like Highlan³⁰ swords,
 Divide the joints an' marrow ;
 His talk o' Hell, whare devils dwell,
 Our vera " sauls docs harrow " †
 Wi' fright that day !

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit, 190
 Fill'd fou o' lowin brunstane,
 Wha's raging flame, an' scorching heat,
 Wad melt the hardest whun-stane
 The half asleep start up wi' fear,
 An' think they hear it roarin,
 When presently it does appear,
 'Twas but some neebor snorin
 Asleep that day.

'Twad be owre lang a tale, to tell
 How monie stories past, 200
 An' how they crowded to the yill,
 When they were a' dismissit :
 How drink³¹ gaed round, in cogs³² an' caups,
 Amang the furms and benches ;
 An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
 Was dealt about in lunches,
 An' dawds that day.

In comes a gaucie, gash Guidwife,
 An' sits down by the fire,

VAR. ²⁹ Black Jock. MS. See p. 27, note.
³⁰ twae edg't. ³¹ yill. MS. ³² jugs.

* Kilmarnock. MS. † Shakespeare's Hamlet, R. B.

Syne³³ draws her kebbuck an' her knife, 210

The lasses they are shyer.

The auld Guidmen, about the grace,

Frae side to side they bother,

Till some ane by his bonnet lays,

An' gi'es them't like a tether,

Fu' lang that day.

Wacsucks! for him that gets nae lass,

Or lasses that hao naething!

Sma' need has he to say a grace,

Or melvie his braw claithing! 220

O Wives, be mindfu', ance yoursel

How bonie lads ye wanted,

An' dinna, for a kebbuck-heel,

Let lasses be affronted

On sic a day!

Now Clinkumbell, wi' rattling tow,

Begins to jow an' croon;³⁴

Some swagger hame, the best they dow,

Some wait the afternoon.

At slaps the billics halt a blink, 230

Till lasses strip their shoon:

Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink,

They're a' in famous tune

For crack that day.

How monie hearts this day converts

O' sinners and o' lasses!


VAR. ³³ Then.

³⁴ Then Robin Gib wi' weary jow,
Begins tae clink an' croon. MS.

Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane
 As saft as ony flesh is.
 There's some are fou o' love divine,
 There's some are fou o' brandy ; 240
 An' monie jobs that day begin,
 May end in Houghmagandie
 Some ither day.

DEATH AND DOCTOR HORNBOOK.*

A TRUE STORY.

OME books are lies frae end to end,
 And some great lies were never penn'd:
 Ev'n Ministers, they hae been kenn'd,
 In holy rapture,
 Great lies and nonsense baith¹ to vend,
 And nail't wi' Scripture.

VAR. ¹ A rousing whid, at times, in some copies; but as in the text in the editions printed in Burns' lifetime.

* Gilbert Burns stated to Dr. Currie, in April, 1798, that "Death and Doctor Hornbook," though not published in the Kilmarnock edition, was produced early in the year 1785; and that John Wilson, the school-master of Tarbolton parish, to eke up the scanty subsistence allowed to that useful class of men, had set up a shop of grocery goods. Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of a few medicines to his little trade. He had got a shop-bill printed, at the bottom of which, overlooking his own incapacity, he had advertised, that 'Advice would be given in common disorders at the shop, gratis.' Robert was at a mason-meeting in Tarbolton, when the Dominie unfortunately made too ostentatious a

I was come round about the hill,
And todlin down on Willie's mill,
Setting my staff, wi' a' my skill,
 To keep me sicker ;
Tho' leeward whyles, against my will,
 I took a bicker.

30

I there wi' Something does forgather,
That pat me in an eerie swither ;
An awfu' scythe, out-owre ae shouter,
Clear-dangling, hang :
A three-taed leister on the ither
Lay, large an' lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a wame it had ava,
 And then its shanks, 40
They were as thin, as sharp an' sma'
 As choeks o' branks.

' Guid-een,' quo' I ; ' Friend ! hao ye been mawin,
 ' When ither folk are busy sawin ? '*
 It seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
 But naething spak ;
 At length, says I, ' Friend, whare ye gaun,
 ' Will ye go back ?'

It spak right howe—' My name is Death,
' But be na fley'd.'—Quoth I, ' Guid faith, 50
' Ye're maybe come to stap my breath;
' But tent me, billie :

* This rencounter happened in seed-time, 1785. R. B.

‘ Ye ken Jock Hornbook i’ the Clachan,
 ‘ Diel mak his king’s-hood in a spleuchan ! 80
 ‘ He’s grown sae well acquaint wi’ Buchan *
 ‘ An’ ither chaps,
 ‘ The weans haud out their fingers laughin
 ‘ And pouk my hips.

‘ See, here’s a scythe, and there’s a dart,
 ‘ They hae pierc’d mony a gallant heart ;
 ‘ But Doctor Hornbook, wi’ his art
 ‘ And cursed skill,
 ‘ Has made them baith no worth a f—t, 89
 ‘ Damn’d haet they’ll kill.

‘ ’Twas but yestreen, nae farther gaen,
 ‘ I threw a noblo throw at ane ;
 ‘ Wi’less, I’m sure, I’ve hundreds slain
 ‘ But deil-ma-care,
 ‘ It just play’d dirl on the bane,
 ‘ But did nae mair.

‘ Hornbook was by, wi’ ready art,
 ‘ And had sae fortify’d the part,
 ‘ That when I looked to my dart,
 ‘ It was sac blunt, 100
 ‘ Fient haet o’t wad hae pierc’d the heart
 ‘ Of a kail-runt.

‘ I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
 ‘ I near-hand cowpit wi’ my hurry,

brother of the Sovereign Order of the Feula ; but, by intuition and inspiration, is at once an Apothecary, Surgeon, and Physician. R. B.

* Buchan’s “ Domestic Medicine.” R. B.

- ‘ But yet the bauld Apothecary
 ‘ Withstood the shock ;
 ‘ I might as weel hae try’d a quarry
 ‘ O’ hard whin rock.
- ‘ E’en them he canna get attended,
 ‘ Altho’ their face he ne’er had kend it, 110
 ‘ Just sh— in a kail-blade, and send it,
 ‘ As soon’s he smells’t,
 ‘ Baith their disease, and what will mend it,
 ‘ At once he tells’t.
- ‘ And then, a’ doctor’s saws and whittles,
 ‘ Of a’ dimensions, shapes, an’ mettles,
 ‘ A’ kinds o’ boxes, mugs, an’ bottles,
 ‘ He’s sure to hae ;
 ‘ Their Latin names as fast he rattles
 ‘ As A B C. 120
- ‘ Calces o’ fossils, carths, and trees ;
 ‘ True Sal-marinum o’ the seas ;
 ‘ The Farina of beans and pease,
 ‘ He has’t in plenty ;
 ‘ Aqua-fontis, what you please,
 ‘ He can content ye.
- ‘ Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
 ‘ Urinus Spiritus of capons ;
 ‘ Or Mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings,
 ‘ Distill’d *per se* ; 130
 ‘ Sal-alkali o’ Midge-tail clippings,
 ‘ And mony mae.’

‘ A bonie lass, ye kend her name,
 ‘ Some ill-brewn drink had hov’d her wame;
 ‘ She trusts hersel, to hide the shame,
 ‘ In Hornbook’s care;
 ‘ Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
 ‘ To hide it there.

‘ That’s just a swatch o’ Hornbook’s way;
 ‘ Thus goes he on from day to day, 170
 ‘ Thus does he poison, kill, an’ slay,
 ‘ An’s weel pay’d for’t;
 ‘ Yet stops me o’ my lawfu’ prey,
 ‘ Wi’ his damn’d dirt.

‘ But hark ! I’ll tell you of a plot,
 ‘ Tho’ dinna ye be speaking o’t;
 ‘ I’ll nail the self-conceited Sot
 ‘ As dead’s a herrin :
 ‘ Nicest time we meet, I’ll wad a groat,
 ‘ He gets his fairin !’ 180

But just as he began to tell,
 The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
 Some wee, short hour ayont the twal,
 Which rais’d us baith :
 I took the way that pleas’d mysel,
 And sac did Death.

THE BRIGS OF AYR.*

A POEM.

INSCRIBED TO JOHN BALLANTYNE, ESQ., AYR.



HE simple Bard, rough at the rustic
plough,
Learning his tuneful trade from ev'ry
bough ;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush ;
Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn
bush ;
The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill,
Or deep-ton'd plovers, grey, wild-whistling o'er the
hill ;
Shall he, nurst in the Peasant's lowly shed,

* "Ayr," says Allan Cunningham, "became a Royal Bugh as early as 1202; and the 'Auld Brig' might well have the 'very wrinkles gothic in its face,' for it was erected in the reign of Alexander III. The 'New Brig' stands a hundred yards or so below the old one, and was chiefly raised by the patriotic exertions of that Ballantyne to whom the Poem is inscribed." Burns wrote it in Edinburgh, and it was first printed in the second edition of his works, in 1787. In a letter from the Poet to Mr. Aiken, in 1786, he says, "There is scarcely any thing hurts me so much in being disappointed of my second edition, as not having it in my power to show my gratitude to Mr. Ballantyne, by publishing my poem of 'The Brigs of Ayr.' I would detest myself as a wretch if I thought I were capable in a very long life, of forgetting the honest, warm, and tender delicacy with which he enters into my interests." The variations are from a MS. copy in the Poet's own hand.

To hardy independence bravely bred,
 By early poverty to hardship steel'd,
 And train'd to arms in stern Misfortune's field ; 10
 Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
 The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes ?
 Or labour hard the panegyric close,
 With all the venal soul of dedicating Prose ?
 No ! though his artless stains he rudely sings,
 And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,
 He glows with all the spirit of the Bard,
 Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward.
 Still, if some Patron's gen'rous care he trace,
 Skill'd in the secret, to bestow with grace ; 20
 When Ballantyne befriends his¹ humble name,
 And hands the rustie Stranger up to fame,
 With heartfelt throes his grateful bosom swells,
 The godlike bliss, to give, alone excels.

'Twas when the stacks get on their winter-hap,
 And thack and rape secure the toil-won crap ;
 Potatoc-bings are snuggled up frae skaith
 O' coming Winter's biting, frosty breath ; .
 The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer toils,
 Unnumber'd buds an' flow'rs delicious² spoils, 30
 Seal'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
 Are doom'd by Man, that tyrant o'er the weak,
 The death o' devils, smoor'd wi' brimstone reek :
 The thund'ring guns are heard on ev'ry side,
 The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide ;
 The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
 Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie :
 (What warm, poetic heart, but inly bleeds,

VAR. ¹ the. MS.

² and flowerets nect'rine. MS.

And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds !)
 Nae mair the flow'r in field or meadow springs ; 40
 Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings,
 Except perhaps the Robin's whistling glee,
 Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree :
 The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
 Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noontide blaze,
 While thick the gossamour waves wanton in the rays.

'Twas in that season ; when a simple Bard,
 Unknown and poor, simplicity's reward,
 Ae night, within the ancient brugh of Ayr,
 By whim inspir'd, or haply prest wi' care, 50
 He left his bed and took his wayward rout,
 And down by Simpson's* wheel'd the left about
 (Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate,
 To witness what I after shall narrate ;³
 Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
 He wander'd out⁴ he knew not where nor why :)
 The drowsy Dungeon⁵ clock † had number'd two,
 And Wallace Tow'r † had sworn the fact was true :
 The tide-swoln Firth, wi' sullen-sounding roar,
 Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore :
 All else was hush'd as Nature's closed o'e ; 61
 The silent moon shone high o'er tow'r and tree :
 The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
 Crept, gently-crusting, owre the glittering stream.—

VAR. ³ In the MS. copy these lines here occur :
 Or penitential pangs for former sins,
 Led him to rove by quondam Merran Din's.
⁴ forth. MS. ⁵ steeple. MS.

* A noted tavern at the Auld Brig end. R. B.

† The two steeples. R. B.

When, lo ! on either hand the list'ning Bard,
 The clanging sugh of whistling wings is heard ;⁶
 Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air,
 Swift as the gos* drives on the wheeling hare ;
 Ane on th' Auld Brig his airy shape uprears,
 The ither flutters o'er the rising piers : 70
 Our warlock Rhymer instantly desery'd
 The Sprites that owre the Brigs of Ayr preside.
 (That Bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
 And ken the lingo of the sp'ritual folk ;
 Fays, Spunkies, Kelpies, a', they can explain them,
 And ev'n the vera deils they brawly ken them.)
 Auld Brig appear'd o' ancient Pictish race,
 The vera wrinkles Gothic in his face ;
 He seem'd as he wi' Time had warstl'd lang,
 Yet, toughly doure, he bade an unco bang. 80
 New Brig was buskit, in a braw new coat,
 That he, at Lon'on, frae anc Adams got ;
 In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a bead,
 Wi' virls an' whirlygigums at the head.
 The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,
 Spying the time-worn flaws in ev'ry arch ;
 It chanc'd his new-come neebor took his e'e,
 And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he !
 Wi' thieveless sneer to see his modish mien,
 He, down the water, gies him this guideen :— 90

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na, Frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheep-shank,

VAR. ⁶ Burns originally wrote,
 When lo ! before our Bardie's wond'ring e'en
 The Brigs of Ayr's twa sprites are seen.

* The Gos-hawk, or Falcon. R. B.

Ance ye were streekit owre frae bank to bank !
 But gin ye be a brig as auld as me,
 Tho', faith ! that date, I doubt, ye'll never see ;
 There'll be, if that day come, I'll wad a boddle,
 Some fewer whigmeleeries in your noddle.

NEW BRIG.

Auld Vandal, ye but show your little mense,
 Just much about it wi' your scanty sense ;
 Will your poor, narrow foot-path of a street,⁷
 Where twa wheel-barrowstremble when they meet,⁷
 Your ruin'd, formless bulk o' stane and lime, 101
 Compare wi' bonie Brigs o' modern time ?
 There's men of taste wou'd tak the Ducat-stream,*
 Tho' they should cast the vera sark and swim,
 Ere they would grate their feelings wi' the view
 O' sic an ugly, Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk ! puff'd up wi' windy pride !
 This mony a year I've stood the flood an' tide ;
 And tho' wi' crazy eild I'm sair forfairn,
 I'll be a Brig, when ye're a shapeless cairn ! 110
 As yet ye little ken about the matter,
 But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
 When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,
 Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains ;
 When from the hills where springs the brawling
 Coil,

VAR. ⁷ These two lines are not in the MS. copy, which reads,
 Will your auld formless bulk o' stane an' lime
 Compare, &c.

* A noted ford, just above the Auld Brig. R. B.

Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil,
 Or where the Greenock winds his⁸ moorland course,
 Or haunted Garpal* draws his⁸ feeble source,
 Arous'd by blust'ring winds an' spotting⁹ thowes,
 In mony a torrent down his snaw-broo rowes; 120
 While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spate,
 Sweeps dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate;
 And from Glenbuck,† down to the Ratton-key,‡
 Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd, tumbling sea;
 Then down ye'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise!
 And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies.
 A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
 That Architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG.

Fine Architecture, trowth, I needs must say't o't!
 The Lord be thankit that we've tint the gate o't!
 Gaunt, ghastly, ghaist-alluring edifices, 131
 Hanging with threat'ning jut, like precipices:
 O'er arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves,
 Supporting roofs, fantastic, stony groves:
 Windows and doors in nameless sculptures drest,
 With order, symmetry, or taste unblest;
 Forms like some bedlam Statuary's dream,
 The craz'd creations of misguided whim;
 Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,

VAR. ⁸ its. MS.⁹ spotted. MS.

* The banks of Garpal Water is one of the few places in the West of Scotland, where those fancy-scaring beings, known by the name of Ghaists, still continue pertinaciously to inhabit. R. B.

† The source of the river Ayr. R. B.

‡ A small landing place above the large key. R. B.

And still the second dread command be free, 140
 Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea.
 Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
 Of any mason reptile, bird, or beast;
 Fit only for a doited monkish race,
 Or frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace,
 Or Cuifs of later times, wha held the notion,
 That sullen gloom was sterling, true devotion;
 Fancies that our guid Brugh denies protection,
 And soon may they expire, unblest with resurrec-
 tion!

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd, ancient yealins, 150
 Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!
 Ye worthy Proveses, an' mony a Bailie,
 Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil ay;
 Ye dainty Deacons, an' ye douce Conveeners,
 To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners!
 Ye godly Councils wha hae blest this town;
 Ye godly Brethren o' the sacred gown,
 Wha meekly gie your hurdies to the smiters;
 And (what would now be strange) ye godly Writers:
 A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo, 160
 Were ye but here, what would ye say or do!
 How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,
 To see each melancholy alteration;
 And agonizing, curse the time and place¹⁰
 When ye begat the base, degen'rate race!¹⁰
 Nae langer Rev'rend Men, their country's glory,
 In plain, braid Scots hold forth a plain, braid story;
 Nae langer thrifty Citizens, an' douce,

VAR. ¹⁰ These two lines are not in the MS. copy.

Meet owre a pint, or in the Council-house ;
 But staumrel, corky-headed, graceless Gentry, 170
 The herryment and ruin of the¹¹ country ;
 Men, three-parts made by Tailors and by Barbers,
 Wha waste your weel-hain'd gear on damn'd new
 Brigs and Harbours !

NEW BRIG.

Now haud you there ! faith ye've said enough,
 And muckle mair than ye can mak to through ;¹²
 As for your Priesthood, I shall say but little,
 Corbies and Clergy are a shot right kittle :
 But, under favour o' your langer beard,
 Abuse o' Magistrates might weel be spar'd :
 To liken them to your auld-warld squad,¹³ 180
 I must needs say, comparisons are odd.¹⁴
 In Ayr, Wag-wits nae mair can have a handle
 To mouth 'a Citizen,' a term o' scandal :
 Nae mair the Council waddles down the street,¹⁵
 In all the pomp of ignorant conceit ;
 Men wha grew wise priggin owre hops an' raisins,
 Or gather'd lib'ral views in Bonds and Seisins.
 If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
 Had shor'd them wi' a glimmer of his lamp,

VAR. ¹¹ o' their. MS.

¹² The following lines occur in the MS. copy :
 That's ay a string auld doytet Gray beards harp on,
 A topic for their peevishness to carp on.

¹³ bodies.

¹⁴ odious.

¹⁵ Nae mair downstreet the Council Quorum waddles
 With wigs like mainsails on their logger noddles,
 No difference but bulkiest or tallest,
 With comfortable Dulness in for ballast :
 Nor shoals nor currents need a Pilot's caution,
 For regularly slow, they only witness motion.
 Men wha grew, &c. MS.

And would to Common-sense for once betray'd
 them, 190
 Plain, dull¹⁶ Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

What farther clishmaclaver might been said,
 What bloody wars, if Sprites had blood to shed,
 No man can tell ; but all before their sight
 A fairy train appear'd in order bright :
 Adown the glittering stream they featly danc'd ;
 Bright to the moon their various dresses glanc'd :
 They footed o'er the wat'ry glass so neat,
 The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet :
 While arts of Minstrelsy among them rung, 200
 And soul-ennobling Bards heroic ditties sung.
 O had M'Lauchlan,* thairm-inspiring sage,
 Deen there to hear this heavenly band engage,
 When thro' his dear strathspeys they bore with
 Highland rage,
 Or when they struck¹⁷ old Scotia's melting airs,
 The lover's raptur'd joys or bleeding cares ;
 How would his Highland lug been nobler fir'd,
 And ev'n his matchless hand with finer touch in-
 spir'd !

No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
 But all the soul of Music's self was heard ; 210
 Harmonious concert rung in every part,
 While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

The Genius of the Stream in front appears,
 A venerable Chief, advanc'd in years ;
 His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,

VAR. ¹⁶ kind. MS.

¹⁷ touch'd.

* A well-known performer of Scottish music on the violin.
 R. B.

His manly leg with garter-tangle bound.
 Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
 Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring :
 Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came Rural Joy,
 And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye : 220
 All-cheering Plenty, with her ¹⁸ flowing horn,
 Led yellow Autumn wreath'd with nodding corn ;
 Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,
 By Hospitality with cloudless brow ;
 Next follow'd Courage with his martial stride,
 From where the Feal* wild-woody coverts hide ;
 Benevolence, with mild, benignant air,
 A Female form, came from the tow'rs of Stair :†
 Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
 From simple Catrine,‡ their long-lov'd abode : 230
 Last, white-rob'd Peace, crown'd with a hazel
 wreath,
 To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
 The broken, iron instruments of death :
 At sight of whom our Sprites forgot their kindling
 wrath.

VAR. ¹⁸ his.

* A small stream which runs near Coilsfield.

† Stair then belonged to Mrs. Stewart, who is the female alluded to.

‡ A beautiful little place, the retreat of Professor Dugald Stewart.

THE ORDINATION.*

For sense, they little owe to frugal Heav'n—
To please the mob, they hide the little giv'n.

KILMARNOCK Wabsters, fidge and claw,
An' pour your creeshie nations;
An' ye wha leather rax an' draw,
Of a' denominations;
Swith to the Laigh Kirk, ane an' a',
An' there tak up your stations;
Then aff to Begbie's in a raw,
An' pour divine libations
For joy this day.

Curst Common-sense, that imp o' hell, 10
Cam in wi' † Maggie Lauder;
But Oliphant aft made her yell,
An' Russel sair misca'd her;

* In a letter from Burns to Mr. John Richmond, dated Mossgiel, 17th Feb. 1786, he says, "I have been very busy with the Muses since I saw you, and have composed, among several others, 'The Ordination;' a Poem, on Mr. Mackinlay's being called to Kilmarnock; 'Scotch Drink,' a poem; 'The Cotter's Saturday Night;' 'An Address to the Devil,' &c. It was first printed in the second edition of his works. The variations are from a copy in Burns' autograph, which also supplies the names of the persons alluded to.

† Alluding to a scoffing ballad which was made on the admission of the late Reverend and worthy Mr. L[indsay] to the Laigh Kirk. R. B. Mr. Thomson asked Burns in October, 1794, "Pray what do your anecdotes say concerning 'Maggie Lauder?' Was she a real personage, and of what rank? You would surely 'spier for her if you ca'd at An-

This day M'Kinlay taks the flail,
 An' he's the boy will blaud her !
 He'll clap a shangan on her tail,
 An' set the bairns to daud her
 Wi' dirt this day.

Mak haste an' turn king David owre,
 An' lilt wi' holy clangor ; 20
 O' double verse come gie us four,
 An' skirl up the Bangor :
 This day the Kirk kicks up a stoure,
 Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
 For Heresy is in her pow'r,
 And gloriously she'll whang her
 Wi' pith this day.

Come, let a proper text be read,¹
 An' touch it off wi' vigour,
 How graceless Ham* leugh at his dad,² 30
 Which made Canaan a niger :
 Or Phineas† drove the murdering blade,³
 Wi' whore-abhorring rigour ;

VAR. ¹ Come wale a text, a proper verse. MS.

² How Ham leugh at his father's a—se. MS.

³ did four buttocks pierce. M.S.

struther town.'” The Poet's answer to Thomson does not appear, and Mr. Allan Cunningham observes, “of Maggie Lauder much has been written by annotators, but no light has been thrown upon either her birth-place or her station; she is likely a creation of the minstrel's muse, and belongs to the imagination.” Burns has, however, given a simple explanation of the mystery. In a copy of the “Ordination,” in his own hand, he says in a note to this verse, “Maggie Lauder. The maiden name of the late Reverend Mr. Lindsay's wife.”

* Genesis, ix. 22. R. B.

† Numbers, xxv. 8. R. B

Or Zipporah,* the scauldin jad,⁴
 Was like a bluidy tiger
 I' th' Inn that day.

There, try his mettle on the creed,
 And bind him down wi' caution,⁵
 That Stipend is a carnal weed
 He takes but for the fashion ; 40
 An' gie him o'er the flock, to feed.
 And punish each transgression ;
 Especial, rams that cross the breed,
 Gie them sufficient threshin,
 Spare them nae day.

Now auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
 An' toss thy horns fu' canty ;
 • Nae mair thou'lt rowte out owre the dale,
 Because thy pasture's scanty ;
 For lapfu's large o' gospel kail 50
 Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
 An' runts o' grace the pick an' wale,
 No gie'n by way o' dainty,
 But ilka day.

Nae mair by Babel streams we'll weep,
 To think upon our Zion ;
 And hing our fiddles up to sleep,
 Like baby-clouts a-dryin :
 Come, screw the pegs wi' tunefu' cheep,

VAR. ⁴ wi' scauldin haerse. MS.

⁵ Formula and Confession :
 And lay your hands upon his head,
 An' seal his high commission.
 The Holy flock to tent an' feed.

* Exodus, iv. 25. R. B.

And o'er the thairms be tryin ; 60
 Oh rare ! to see our elbucks wheep,
 And a' like lamb-tails flyin
 Fu' fast this day !

Lang, Patronage, wi' rod o' airn,
 Has shor'd the Kirk's undoin,
 As lately Fenwick, sair forfairn,
 Has proven to his ruin :
 Our Patron honest man ! Glencairn,
 He saw mischief was brewin ;
 And like a godly, elect bairn, 70
 He's wal'd us out a true ane,
 And sound this day.

Now Robinson harangue nae mair,
 But steek your gab for ever :
 Or try the wicked town of Ayr,
 For there they'll think you clever ;
 Or, nae reflection on your lear,
 Ye may commence a Shaver ;
 Or to the Netherton repair,
 And turn a Carpet-weaver 80
 Aff-hand this day.

Mutrie and you were just a match,
 We never had sic twa drones : -
 Auld Hornie did the Laigh Kirk watch,
 Just like a winkin baudrons :
 And ay he catch'd the tither wretch,
 To fry them in his caudrons ;
 But now his Honour maun detach,
 Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
 Fast, fast ⁶ this day. 90

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes ·
 She's swingein thro' the city ;
 Hark, how the nine-tail'd cat she plays !
 I vow it's unco pretty !
 There, Learning, with his Greekish face,
 Grunts out some Latin ditty ;
 And Common Sense is gaun, she says,
 To mak to Jamie Beattie
 Her plaint this day.

But there's Morality himsel, 100
 Embracing all opinions ;
 Hear, how he gies the tither yell,
 Between his twa companions ;
 See, how she peels the skin an' fell,
 As ane were peelin onions !
 Now there, they're packed aff to hell,
 And banish'd our dominions,
 Henceforth this day.

O happy day ! rejoice, rejoice !
 Come bouse about the porter ! 110
 Morality's demure decoys⁷
 Shall here nao mair find quarter :
 M'Kinlay, Russel are the boys
 That Heresy can torture ;⁸
 They'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,
 And cove her measure shorter
 By th' head some day.

Come, bring the tither mutchkin in,
 And here's, for a conclusion,

VAR. ⁷ delusive joys. MS.


⁸ Will clap him in the torture. MS.

To every New Light* mother's son, 120
 From this time forth, Confusion :
 If mair they deave us with their din,
 Or Patronage intrusion,
 We'll light a spunk, and, ev'ry skin,
 We'll rin them aff in fusion
 Like oil, some day.

THE CALF.†

TO THE REV. MR. JAMES STEVEN, ON HIS TEXT,
 MALACHI, CH. IV. VER. 2.

"And ye shall go forth, and grow up, as CALVES of
 the stall."

IGHT, Sir! your text I'll prove it true,
 Tho' Heretics may laugh;
 For instance; there's yoursel just now,
 God knows, an unco Calf!

* New Light is a cant phrase, in the West of Scotland, for those religious opinions which Dr. Taylor of Norwich has so strenuously defended. R. B.

† Allan Cunningham states that these verses, which were first printed in the second edition, arose from the following circumstance: "Burns and his friend Gavin Hamilton being present when the Rev. James Steven, then a young man, preached from the above text, Hamilton desired the Poet to dine with him on his return from the kirk, and to be sure and remember the text. On sitting down to dinner Burns repeated the verses." In a letter from Burns to Mr. Robert Muir, he says, "Warm recollection of an absent friend presses so hard upon my heart, that I send him the prefixed bagatelle (the Calf), pleased with the thought that it will greet the man of my bosom, and be a kind of distant language of friendship"—"It was," he adds, "nearly an extemporaneous production on a wager with Mr. Hamilton, that I would not produce a poem on the subject in a given

And should some Patron be so kind,
 As bless you wi' a kirk,
 I doubt na, Sir, but then we'll find.
 Ye're still as great a Stirk.

But, if the Lover's raptur'd hour
 Shall ever be your lot, 10
 Forbid it, ev'ry heavenly Power,
 You e'er should be a Stot!

Tho', when some kind, connubial Dear,
 Your But-and-Ben adorns,
 The like has been that you may wear
 A noble head of horns.

And, in your lug, most reverend James,
 To hear you roar and rowte,
 Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
 To rank amang the Nowte. 20

time. If you think it worth while, read it to Charles and W. Parker, and if they choose a copy of it, it is at their service, as they are men whose friendship I shall be proud to claim, both in this world and that which is to come."

Burns' attack upon Mr. Steven as a *Calf* provoked a retort, in which the assailant seems to have been characterized as a *Bullock*. Among the Poems of David Sillar are some "Verses occasioned by a reply to Burns' Calf, by an unco Calf," (a copy of which will be found in the Appendix,) with this motto:

"A preachin' Calf—a Poet wearin' cloots—
 Are surely ferlies 'mang the nat'ral brutes."

Sillar censures both parties, but principally Burns.

The appellation of "The Calf" seems to have adhered to the preacher, for in a letter from William Burns, the Poet's younger brother, dated London, 21 March, 1790, he says, 'We were at Covent Garden Chapel this forenoon to hear the Calf preach: he is grown very fat, and is as boisterous as ever.'

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame; ¹
 Far kend an' noted is thy name;
 An' tho' yon lowin heugh's thy hame,
 Thou travels far;
 An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
 Nor blate nor scaur.

Whyles, ranging like a roarin lion,
 For prey, a' holes an' corners tryin; 20
 Whyles on the strong-wing'd Tempest flyin,
 Tirlin the kirks;
 Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
 Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend Graunie say,
 In lanely glens ye like to stray;
 Or where auld, ruin'd castles, gray,
 Nod to the moon,
 Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
 Wi' eldritch croon. 30

When twilight did my Graunie summon,
 To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman!
 Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,
 Wi' eerie drone;
 Or, rustlin, thro' the boortrics comin,
 Wi' heavy groan.

VAR. ¹ In 'The Address to the Deil,' the third stanza,
 though always printed as in the text, was originally

Lang syne in Eden's happy scene,
 When strappin' Adam's days were green
 And Eve was like my bonie Jean,
 My dearest part,
 A dancin' sweet, young, handsome quean,
 Wi' guileless heart.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
 The stars shot down wi' sklentín light,
 Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
 Ayont the lough ; 40
 Ye, like a rash-buss, stood in sight,
 Wi' waving sugh.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
 Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
 When wi' an eldritch, stoor quaick, quaick,
 Amang the springs,
 Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
 On whistling wings.

Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd hags,
 Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags, 50
 They skim the muirs, an' dizzy crags,
 Wi' wicked speed ;
 And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
 Owre howkit dead.

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
 May plunge and plunge the kirk in vain ;
 For, Oh ! the yellow treasure's taen
 By witching skill ;
 An' dawtit, twal-pint Hawkie's gaen
 As yell's the Bill. 60

Thence, mystic knots mak great abuse,
 On young Guidmen, fond, keen, an' crouse ;
 When the best wark-lume i' the house,
 By cantrip wit,
 Is instant made no worth a louse,
 Just at the bit.

When thoues dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin icy-boord,
Then, Water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction, 70
An' nighted Trav'lers are allur'd
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing Spunkies
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is :
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkies
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When Mason's mystic word an' grip,
In storms an' tempests raise you up, 80
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell !
The youngest Brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry swaird,
In shady bow'r : 90

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawing dog !
Ye came to Paradise incog.
An' play'd on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be you fa !)
An' gied the infant warld a shog,
'Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
 Wi' reekit duds, an' reestit gizz,
 Ye did present your smoutie phiz,
 'Mang better folk, 100
 An' sklented on the man of Uzz
 Your spitefu' joke ?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
 An' brak him out o' house an' hal',
 While scabs an' blotches did him gall,
 Wi' bitter claw,
 An' lows'd his ill-tongu'd, wicked Scawl,
 Was warst ava ?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
 Your wily snares an' fechin fierce, 110
 Sin' that day Michael* did you pierce,
 Down to this time,
 Wad ding a' Lallan tongue, or Erse,
 In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
 A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
 Some luckless hour will send him linkin,
 To your black pit ;
 But, faith ! he'll turn a corner jinkin,
 An' cheat you yet. 120


But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben !
 O wad ye tak a thought an' men' !

* Vide Milton, Book vi. R. B.

Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
 Still hae a stake—
 I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
 Ev'n for your sake!

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF
 POOR MAILIE,* THE AUTHOR'S
 ONLY PET YOWE.

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

 S Mailie, an' her lambs thegither,
 Was ae day nibbling on the tether,
 Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
 An' owre she warsl'd in the ditch;
 There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
 When Hughoc† he cam doytin by.

* Gilbert Burns informed Dr. Currie, that "Poor Mailie" was written before 1784, and added that "The circumstances of the poor sheep were pretty much as he has described them: he had, partly by way of frolic, bought a ewe and two lambs from a neighbour, and she was tethered in a field adjoining the house at Lochlie. He and I were going out with our teams, and our two younger brothers to drive for us, at mid-day, when Hugh Wilson, a curious-looking awkward boy, clad in plaiding, came to us with much anxiety in his face, with the information that the ewe had entangled herself in the tether, and was lying in the ditch. Robert was much tickled with Huoc's appearance and postures on the occasion. Poor Mailie was set to rights, and when we returned from the plough in the evening, he repeated to me her 'Death and dying words' pretty much in the way they now stand."

† A neibor herd-callan. R. B.

Wi' glowrin een, an' lifted han's,
 Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's ;
 He saw her days were near hand ended,
 But, waes my heart ! he could na mend it ! 10
 He gaped wide, but naething spak.
 At length poor Mailie silence brak.

' O thou, whase lamentable face
 Appears to mourn my woefu' case !
 My dying words attentive hear,
 An' bear them to my Master dear.

' Tell him, if o'er again he keep
 As muckle gear as buy a sheep,
 O, bid him never tie them mair
 Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair ! 20
 But ca' them out to park or hill,
 An' let them wander at their will ;
 So may his flock increase, an' grow
 To scores o' lambs, an' packs o' woo' ! .

' Tell him, he was a Master kin',
 An' ay was guid to me an' mine ;
 An' now my dying charge I gie him,
 My helpless lambs, I trust them wi' him.

' O, bid him save their harmless lives,
 Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butchers' knives ! 30
 But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
 Till they be fit to fend themsel :
 An' tent them duly, e'en an' morn,
 Wi' teats o' hay an' rippis o' corn.

' An' may they never learn the gaets
 Of ither vile wanrestfu' pets !
 To slink thro' slaps, an' reave an' steal,
 At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail.

So may they, like their great Forbears,
 For monie a year come thro' the sheers ; 40
 So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
 An' bairns greet for them when they're dead.

‘ My poor toop-lamb, my son an' heir,
 O, bid him breed him up wi' care !
 An', if he live to be a beast,
 To pit some havins in his breast !
 An' warn him, what I winna name,
 To stay content wi' yowes at hame ;
 An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
 Like ither menseless, graceless brutes. 50

‘ An niest my yowie, silly thing,
 Gude keep thee frae a tether string !
 O, may thou ne'er forgather up
 • Wi' only blastit, moorland toop ;
 But ay keep mind to moop an' mell,
 Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel !

‘ And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath,
 I lea'e my blessin wi' you baith :
 An' when you think upo' your Mither,
 Mind to be kind to ane anither. - 60

‘ Now, honest Hughoc, dinna fail,
 To tell my Master a' my tale ;
 An' bid him burn this cursed tether,
 An', for thy pains, thou'se get my blather.’

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
 An' clos'd her een amang the dead !

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.



LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
 Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose;
 Our Bardie's fate is at a close,
 Past a' remead;
 The last, sad cape-stane of his woes;
 Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
 That could sae bitter draw the tear,
 Or mak our Bardie, dowie, wear
 The mourning weed: 10
 He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
 In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the toun she trotted by him;
 A lang half-mile she could desery him;
 Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
 She ran wi' speed:
 A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
 Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
 An' could behave hersel wi' mense; 20
 I'll say't, she never brak a fence,
 Thro' thievish greed.
 Our Bardie, lanely, keeps the Spence
 Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
 Her living image in her yowe,

Comes bleating to him, owre the knowe,
 For bits o' bread ;
 An' down the briny pearls rowe
 For Mailie dead.

30

She was nae get o' moorland tips,¹
 Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips ;
 For her forbears were brought in ships,
 Frac yont the Tweed :
 • A bonier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips
 Than Mailie dead.

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
 That vile, wanchancie thing—a rape !
 It maks guid fellows girn an' gape,
 Wi' chokin dread ;
 • An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
 For Mailie dead.

40

O, a' ye Bards on bonie Doon !
 An' wha on Ayr your chanter's tune !
 Come, join the melancholious croon
 O' Robin's reed !
 His heart will never get aboon !
 His Mailie's dead !

VAR. ¹ This stanza, as originally written, though printed in the first and all other editions as in the text, was

She was nae get o' runted rams,
 Wi' woo' like goats, and legs like trams ;
 She was the flower o' Fairlie lambs,
 A famous breed :
 Now Robin, greetin', chows the hams
 O' Mailie dead.

TO JAMES SMITH.*

Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
 Sweet'ner of Life, and solder of Society!
 I owe thee much.—— *Blair.*

DEAR Smith, the sleecest, paukie thief,
 That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
 Ye surely hao some warlock-breef
 Owre human hearts;
 For no'er a bosom yet was prief
 Against your arts.

* The person to whom these verses are addressed was then a shopkeeper at Mauchline. In February, 1786, Burns said in a letter to Mr. Richmond from Mossagiel, "I am extremely happy with Smith: he is the only friend I have now in Mauchline." Smith afterwards removed to Avon, near Lulithgow, where he established a calico printing manufactory. On the 28th of April, 1788, Burns thus acquainted him with his marriage: "To let you a little into the secrets of my pericranium, there is, you must know, a certain clean limbed, handsome, bewitching young hussy of your acquaintance, to whom I have lately and privately given a matrimonial title to my corpus." "I intend," he adds, "to present Mrs. Burns with a printed shawl, an article of which I dare say you have variety; 'tis my first present to her since I have irrevocably called her mine; and I have a kind of whimsical wish to get her the said first present from an old and much valued friend of hers and mine, a trusty Tiojan, on whose friendship I count myself possessed of a life rent lease."

Allan Cunningham says, Smith "accompanied Burns into the house of Posie Nancy, and saw the scene which is the subject of 'The Jolly Beggars.' Having failed in his speculations, Smith went to the West Indies, and soon afterwards died. He was a person of ready wit, lively manners, and much respected by the Poet."

For me, I swear by sun an' moon,
And ev'ry star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair o' shoon
 Just gaun to see you ; 10
And ev'ry ithar pair that's done,
 Mair taen I'm wi' you.

That auld, capricious carlin, Nature,
To mak amends for scrimpit stature,
She's turn'd you off, a human creature
On her first plan,
And in her freaks, on ev'ry feature,
She's wrote, 'The Man.'

Just now I've taen the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie noddle's working prime,
My fancie yerkit up sublime
Wi' hasty summon :
Hae ye a leisure moment's time
To hear what's comin' ?

Some rhyme, a neebor's name to lash ;
Some rhyme (vain thought !) for needfu' cash ;
Some rhyme to court the countra clash,
 An' raise a din ;
For me, an aim I never fash ;
 I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the russet coat,
An' damn'd my fortune to the groat ;
But, in requit,
Has blest me wi' a random shot
O' countra wit.

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy-land,
Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right, 70
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic-wand then let us wield ;
For, ance that five-an'-forty's specl'd,
See, crazy, weary, joyless Eild,
Wi' wrinkl'd face,
Comes hostin, hirplin owre the field,
Wi' creepin pace.

When anco life's day draws near the gloamin,
Then fareweel vacant careless roamin ; 80
An' fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin,
An' social noise ;
An' fareweel dear deluding woman,
The joy of joys !

O Life ! how pleasant in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning !
Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scorning,
 We frisk away,
Like school-boys, at th' expected warning,
 To joy and play.

90

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
 Among the leaves ;
And tho' the puny wound appear,
 Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,
For which they never toil'd nor swat ;
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
 But care or pain ; 100
And, haply, eye the barren hut
 With high disdain.

With steady aim, some Fortune chase ;
Keen Hope does ev'ry sinew brace ;
Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
 And seize the prey :
Then canie, in some cozie place,
 They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan',
Poor wights ! nae rules nor roads observin ; 110
To right or left, eternal swervin,
 They zig-zag on ;
Till curst with age, obscure an' starvin,
 They aften groan.

Alas ! what bitter toil an' straining—
But truce wi' peevish, poor complaining !
Is Fortune's fickle Luna waning ?
E'en let her gang !
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang. 120

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, ‘Ye Pow’rs!’ and warm implore,
‘Tho’ I should wander Terra o’er,
 ‘In all her climes,
‘Grant me but this, I ask no more,
 ‘Ay rowth o’ rhymes.

' Gie dreeping roasts to countra Lairds,
 ' Till icicles hing frae their beards ;
 ' Gie fine braw claes to fine Life-guards,
 And Maids of Honour ;
 ' And yill an' whisky gie to cairds,
 ' Until they sconner.

' A Title, Dempster merits it ;
• A Garter gie to Willie Pitt ;
' Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd Cit,
 ' In cent per cent ;
' But gie me real, sterling Wit,
 ' And I'm content.

' While Ye are pleas'd to keep me hale,
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
' Be't water-brose, or muslin-kail,
 ' Wi' cheerfu' face,
' As lang's the Muses dinna fail
 ' To say the grace.'

110

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behint my lug, or by my nose ;
I jouk beneath Misfortune's blows
As weel's I may ;
Sworn foe to Sorrow, Care, and Prose,
I rhyme away. 150

O ye dounce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm, and cool,
Compar'd wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives, a dyke!

Nae hair-brain'd, sentimental traces,
In your unletter'd, nameless faces !
In arioso trills and graces
Ye never stray, 160
But gravissimo, solemn basses
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise ;
Nae ferly tho' ye do despise
The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
 The rattling squad :
I see you upward cast your eyes—
 Ye ken the road.—

Whilst I—but I shall haud me there—
Wi' you I'll scarce gang ony where—
Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
But quat my sang,
Content with You to mak a pair,
Whare'er I gang.

A DREAM.*

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the Statute blames with reason;
But surely DREAMS were ne'er indicted Treason.

On reading, in the public papers, the Laureate's Ode, with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the Birth-day Levee; and in his dreaming fancy, made the following ADDRESS.



GUID-MORNIN to your Majesty!

May heaven augment your blisses,
On ev'ry new birth-day ye see;
A humble Poet¹ wishes!

My Bardship here, at your Levee,
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Amang thae Birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

I see ye're complimented thrang, 10
By many a lord an' lady;
'God save the King!' 's a cuckoo sang
That's unco easy said ay;

VAR. ¹ Bardie. 1st and 2nd Edit.

* "The Dream" appears to have been censured by some of Burns' prudent friends, for he says, in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, 30th April, 1787, "I am happy, madam, that some of my own favourite pieces are distinguished by your particular approbation. For my 'Dream,' which has unfortunately incurred your loyal displeasure, I hope in four weeks, or less, to have the honour of appearing at Dunlop in its defence, in person." That lady and Mrs. Stewart of Stair are said to have solicited him, in vain, to omit "the Dream" in the second edition of his Poems.

And now ye've gien auld Britain peace,
 Her broken shins to plaister ;
 Your sair taxation does her fleece,
 Till she has scarce a tester ;
 For me, thank God, my life's a lease, 50
 Nae bargain wearing faster,
 Or, faith ! I fear, that wi' the geese,
 I shortly boost to pasture
 I' the craft some day.

I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
 When taxes he enlarges,
 (An' Will's a true guid fallow's get,
 A name not envy spairges,)
 That he intends to pay your debt,
 An' lessen a' your charges ; 60
 But, God's sake ! let nae saving-fit
 Abridge your bonie barges
 An' boats this day.

Adieu, my Liege ! may freedom geck
 Beneath your high protection ;
 An' may Ye rax Corruption's neck,
 And gie her for dissection !
 But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
 In loyal, true affection,
 To pay your Queen, with due respect, 70
 My fealty an' subjection
 This great Birth-day.

Hail, Majesty most Excellent !
 While nobles strive to please Ye,
 Will Ye accept a compliment
 A simple Poet² gies Ye ?

Thae bonny bairntime, Heav'n has lent,
 Still higher may they heeze Ye
 In bliss, till Fate some day is sent,
 For ever to release Ye 80
 Frae care that day.

For you, young Potentate o' Wales,
 I tell your Highness fairly,
 Down Pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
 I'm tauld ye're driving rarely ;
 But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
 An' curse your folly sairly, •
 That ere ye brak Diana's pales,
 Or rattl'd dice wi' Charlie
 By night or day. 90

Yet aft a ragged cowl's been known
 To mak a noble aiver ;
 Sae, ye may doucely fill a Throne,
 For a' their clish-ma-claver :
 There, Him* at Agincourt wha shone,
 Few better were or braver ;
 And yet, wi' funny, queer Sir John,†
 He was an unco shaver
 For monie a day.

For you, right rev'rend Osnaburg, 100
 Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
 Altho' a ribban at your lug
 Wad been a dress completer :

* King Henry V. R. B.

† Sir John Falstaff: *vide* Shakespeare. R. B.

As ye disown yon paughty dog,
 That bears the Keys of Peter,
 Then, swith! an' get a wife to hug,
 Or, trouth! ye'll stain the Mitre
 Some luckless day.

Young, royal Tarry Breeks, I learn,
 Ye've lately come athwart her ; 110
 A glorious galley,* stem and stern,
 Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter ;
 But first hang out, that she'll discern
 Your hymeneal charter,
 Then heave aboard your grapple airn,
 An', large upon her quarter,
 Come full that day.

Ye, ~~lastly~~, bonie blossoms a',
 Ye royal Lasses dainty,
 Heav'n mak you guid as weel as braw, 120
 An' gie you lads a plenty :
 But sneer na British boys awa',
 For Kings are unco scant ay ;
 An' German Gentles are but sma',
 They're better just than want ay
 On onie day.

God bless you a' ! consider now
 Ye're unco muckle dautet ;
 But, ere the course o' life be through,
 It may be bitter sautet : 130

* Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain Royal Sailor's amour. R. B.

An' I hae seen their coggie fou,
 That yet hae tarrow't at it;
 But or the day was done, I trow,
 The laggen they hae clautet
 Fu' clean that day.

THE VISION.*

DUAN FIRST.†



HE sun had clos'd the winter day,
 The Curlers quat their roarin play,
 An' hunger'd Maukin taen her way
 To kail-yards green,
 While faithless snaws ilk step betray
 Wharo she has been.

* Miss Rachel Dunlop (who afterwards married Robert Glasgow, Esq.) one of Mrs Dunlop's daughters, appears to have transferred the Coila of the Vision to canvas; for, in February, 1788, Burns wrote to that lady, "I am highly flattered by the news you tell me of Coila. I may say to the fair painter who does me so much honour, as Dr Beattie says to Ross the poet, of his muse *Scota*, from which, by the bye, I took the idea of Coila; ('Tis a poem of Beattie's, in the Scots dialect, which perhaps you have never seen):

'Ye shak your head, but o' my fegs,
 Ye've set auld *Scota* on her legs:
 Lang had she lien wi' buffe and flegs,
 Bombaz'd and dizzie;
 Her fiddle wanted strings and pegs—
 Waes me, poor hizzie!'"

In the Sketch on New Year's Day, he says,

"Coila's fair Rachel's care to-day."

† Duan, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive Poem. See his '*Cath-Loda*,' vol. ii. of M'Pherson's translation. R. B.

The thrasher's weary flingin-tree
The lee-long day had tired me;
And whan the day had clos'd his e'e,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the Spence, right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,
I sat and ey'd the spewing reek,
That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeeke,
The auld, clay biggin;
An' heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin.

All in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mus'd on wasted time, 20
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
— An' done nae-thing,
But stringin blethers up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank, and clarkit
My cash-account :
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount. so

I started, mutt'ring, blockhead ! coof !
And heav'd on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I, henceforth, would be rhyme-proof
Till my last breath—

When click ! the string the snick did draw ;
 And jee ! the door gaed to the wa' ;
 And by my ingle-lowe I saw,
 Now bleezin bright, 40
 A tight, outlandish Hizzie, braw,
 Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt, I held my wisht ;
 The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht ;
 I glowr'd as eerie's I'd been dusht
 In some wild glen ;
 When sweet, like modest worth, she blusht,
 And stepped ben.

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs
 Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows, 50
 I took her for some Scottish Muse,
 By that same token ;
 And come to stop these reckless vows,
 Would soon been broken.

A 'hair-brain'd, sentimental trace,'
 Was strongly marked in her face ;
 A wildly-witty, rustic grace
 Shone full upon her ;
 Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
 Beam'd keen with Honour. 60

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen ;
 Till half a leg was scrimply seen ;
 And such a leg ! my bonie Jean*
 Could only peer it ;

* "My Bess," 1st edition. Allan Cunningham says, "In the original MS. the verse which descends into particulars

Sae straught, sae taper, tight, and clean,
Nane else came near it.

Her mantle large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew ;
Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling, threw,
 A lustre grand ; 70
And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
 A well known land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost ;
There, mountains to the skies were tost :
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
 With surging foam ;
There, distant shone Art's lofty boast,
 The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods;
There, well-fed Irwine stately thuds: 80
Auld hermit Ayr staw thro' his woods,
On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient Borough rear'd her head ;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a Race,

about Coila, claimed for her a leg as straight, and tight, and tapering, as that of Jean Armour. The destruction of the marriage lines brought a blight on his affection; he dethroned her in his Kilmarnock [1786] edition, and raised up another in her stead. Old affection, however, triumphed by the time the Edinburgh edition [1787] was printed, and Jean was restored."

To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
 And polish'd grace.* 90

By stately tow'r or palace fair,
 Or ruins pendent in the air,
 Bold stems of Heroes, here and there,
 I could discern;
 Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
 With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
 To see a Race† heroic wheel,
 And brandish round the deep-dy'd steel
 In sturdy blows; 100
 While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
 Their Suthron foes. •

His COUNTRY'S SAVIOUR,‡ mark him well!
 Bold Richardton's§ heroic swell;
 The Chief on Sark|| who glorious fell,
 In high command;
 And He whom ruthless fates expel
 His native land.

* In the first edition the first Duan of the Vision ends here.

† The Wallaces. R. B. ‡ William Wallace. R. B.

§ Adam Wallace, of Richardton, cousin of the immortal preserver of Scottish independence. R. B.

|| Wallace, Laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas Earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought anno 1448. That glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valour of the gallant Laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action. R. B.

There, where a sceptr'd Pictish shade*
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial Race, pourtray'd
In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd
They strode along.

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove,†
Near many a hermit-fancy'd cove,
(Fit haunts for Friendship or for Love
In musing mood,)
An aged Judge, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good. 120

With deep-struck reverential awe;
The learned Sire and Son I saw,
To Nature's God and Nature's law
They gave their lore,
This, all its source and end to draw,
That, to adore.

Brydon's brave Ward § I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye ;
Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
 To hand him on,
Where many a Patriot name on high,
 And Hero shone.

130

* *Coilus*, King of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family-seat of the Montgomeries of Coilsfield, where his burial-place is still shown. R. B.

† Barskimming, the seat of the Lord Justice Clerk [Miller]. R. B.

† Catrine, the seat of the late Doctor, and present Professor Stewart. R. B. § Colonel Fullarton. R. B.

DUAN SECOND.

WITH musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heavenly-seeming Fair;
A whisp'ring throb did witness bear,
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder Sister's air
She did me greet.

' All hail ! my own inspired Bard !
 ' In me thy native Muse regard ! 140
 ' Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
 ' Thus poorly low !
 • L,come to give thee such reward , . . .
 ' As we bestow.

' Know, the great Genius of this land
 ' Has many a light, ærial band,
 ' Who, all beneath his high command,
 ' Harmoniously,
 ' As Arts or Arms they understand,
 Their labours ply.

150

' They Scotia's Race among them share ;
 ' Some fire the Soldier on to dare ;
 ' Some rouse the Patriot up to bare
 ' Corruption's heart :
 ' Some teach the Bard, a darling care,
 ' The tuneful art.

' 'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
' They, ardent, kindling spirits pour ;

‘ Or, ’mid the venal Senate’s roar,
 ‘ They, sightless, stand, 160

‘ To mend the honest Patriot lore,
 ‘ And grace the hand.,’

‘ And when the Bard, or hoary Sage,

‘ Charm or instruct the future age,

‘ They bind the wild, Poetic rage

 ‘ In energy,

‘ Or point the inconclusive page

 ‘ Full on the eye.

‘ Hence, Fullarton, the brave and young ;

‘ Hence, Dempster’s zeal-inspired tongue ; 170

‘ Hence, sweet harmonious Beattie sung

 ‘ His “ Minstrel lays ;”

‘ Or tore, with noble ardour stung,

 ‘ The Sceptic’s bays.

‘ To lower orders are assign’d

‘ The humbler ranks of human-kind,

‘ The rustic Bard, the lab’ring Hind,

 ‘ The Artisan ;

‘ All chuse, as various they’re inclin’d,

 ‘ The various man. 180

‘ When yellow waves the heavy grain,

‘ The threat’ning storm some strongly rein ;

‘ Some teach to meliorate the plain

 ‘ With tillage-skill ;

‘ And some instruct the Shepherd-train,

 ‘ Blythe o’er the hill.

‘ Some hint the Lover’s harmless wile ;

‘ Some grace the Maiden’s artless smile .

‘ Some soothe the Lab’rer’s weary toil,
 ‘ For humble gains, 190
 ‘ And make his cottage-scenes beguile
 ‘ His cares and pains.

‘ Some, bounded to a district-space,
 ‘ Explore at large Man’s infant race,
 ‘ To mark the embryotic trace
 ‘ Of rustic Bard,
 ‘ And careful note each op’ning grace,
 ‘ A guide and guard.

‘ Of these am I—Coila my name ;
 ‘ And this district as mine I claim, 200
 ‘ Where once the Campbells, chiefs of fame,
 ‘ Held ruling pow’r :
 ‘ I mark’d thy embryo-tuneful flame,
 ‘ Thy natal hour.

‘ With future hope, I oft would gaze,
 ‘ Fond, on thy little early ways,
 ‘ Thy rudely-caroll’d, chiming phrase,
 ‘ In uncouth rhymes,
 ‘ Fir’d at the simple, artless lays
 ‘ Of other times. 210

‘ I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
 ‘ Delighted with the dashing roar ;
 ‘ Or when the North his fleecy store
 ‘ Drove thro’ the sky,
 ‘ I saw grim Nature’s visage hoar,
 ‘ Struck thy young eye.

‘ Or when the deep green mantl’d Earth
 ‘ Warm cherish’d ev’ry flow’ret’s birth,

‘ And joy and music pouring forth
 ‘ In ev’ry grove, 220
 ‘ I saw thee eye the gen’ral mirth
 ‘ With boundless love.

‘ When ripen’d fields, and azure skies,
 ‘ Call’d forth the Reaper’s rustling noise,
 ‘ I saw thee leave their ev’ning joys,
 ‘ And lonely stalk,
 ‘ To vent thy bosom’s swelling rise
 ‘ In pensive walk.

‘ When youthful Love, warm-blushing strong,
 ‘ Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along, 230
 ‘ Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
 ‘ Th’ adored Name,
 ‘ I taught thee how to pour in song,
 ‘ To soothe thy flame.

‘ I saw thy pulse’s maddening play,
 ‘ Wild send thee Pleasure’s devious way,
 ‘ Misled by Fancy’s meteor ray,
 ‘ By Passion driven;
 ‘ But yet the light that led astray
 ‘ Was light from Heaven. 240

‘ I taught thy manners-painting strains,
 ‘ The loves, the ways of simple swains,
 ‘ Till now, o’er all my wide domains
 ‘ Thy fame extends;
 ‘ And some, the pride of Coila’s plains,
 ‘ Become thy friends.

‘ Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
 ‘ To paint with Thomson’s landscape glow;

‘ Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
 ‘ With Shenstone’s art ; 250
 ‘ Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
 ‘ Warm on the heart.

‘ Yet, all beneath th’ unrivall’d rose,
 ‘ The lowly daisy sweetly blows ;
 ‘ Tho’ large the forest’s monarch throws
 ‘ His army shade,
 ‘ Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
 ‘ Adown the glade.

‘ Then never murmur nor repine ;
 ‘ Strive in thy humble sphere to shine ; 260
 ‘ And trust me, not Potosi’s mine,
 ‘ Nor King’s reward,
 ‘ Can give a bliss o’ermatching thine,
 ‘ A rustic Bard.

‘ To give my counsels all in one,
 ‘ Thy tuneful flame still careful fan ;
 ‘ Preserve the dignity of Man,
 ‘ With Soul erect ;
 ‘ And trust, the Universal Plan
 ‘ Will all protect. 270

‘ And wear thou this ’—she solemn said,
 And bound the Holly round my head :
 The polish’d leaves, and berries red,
 Did rustling play ;
 And, like a passing thought, she fled
 In light away.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.*

My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them aye thegither;
The RIGID RIGHTEOUS is a fool,
The RIGID WISE anither:
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin.

Solomon.—Eccles. vii. 16.



YE wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your Neebour's fauts and folly!

* In this beautiful Poem, which was first printed in the second edition of his works, Burns has versified the following reflections, which occur among the memoranda given by him to Mr. Riddell:

March, 1784.

"I have often observed, in the course of my experience of human life, that every man, even the worst, has something good about him, though very often nothing else than a happy temperament of constitution inclining him to this or that virtue. For this reason, no man can say in what degree any other person, besides himself, can be, with strict justice, called *wicked*. Let any of the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us examine impartially how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but for want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped, because he was out of the line of such temptation; and, what often, if not always, weighs more than the rest, how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know all: I say, any man who can thus think ~~of~~ scan the failings, nay, the faults and crimes, of mankind around him, with a brother's eye."

Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
 Supply'd wi' store o' water,
 The heapet happer's ebbing still,
 And still the clap plays clatter.

Hear me, ye venerable Core,
 As counsel for poor mortals, 10
 That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door,
 For glaikit Folly's portals ;
 I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
 Would here propone defences,
 Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
 Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' their's compar'd,
 And shudder at the niffer,
 But cast a moment's fair regard,
 What maks the mighty differ ; 20
 Discount what scant occasion gave
 That purity ye pride in,
 And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
 Your better art o' hiding.

Think, when your castigated pulse
 Gies now and then a wallop,
 What raging must his veins convulse,
 That still eternal gallop :
 Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
 Right on ye scud your sea-way ; 30
 But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
 It maks an unco leeway.

See Social life and Glee sit down,
 All joyous and unthinking.

Till, quite transmúgrify'd, they're grown

Debauchery and Drinking :

O would they stay to calculate

Th' eternal consequences ;

Or your more dreaded hell to state,

Damnation of expenses !

40

Ye high, exalted, virtuous Dames,

Ty'd up in godly laces,

Before ye gie poor Frailty names,

Suppose a change o' cases ;

A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,

A treacherous inclination—

But, let me whisper i' your lug,

Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother Man,

Still gentler sister Woman ;

50

Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,

To step aside is human :

One point must still be greatly dark,

The moving *Why* they do it ;

And just as lamely can ye mark,

How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone

Decidedly can try us,

He knows each chord—its various tone,

Each spring—its various bias :

60

Then at the balance let's be mute,

We never can adjust it ;

What's *done* we partly may compute,

But know not what's *resisted*.

TAM SAMSON'S ELEGY.*

An honest man's the noblest work of God.—*Pope.*



AS hould Kilmarnock seen the Deil?
 Or great M'Kinlay † thrawn his heel?
 Or Robinson ‡ again grown weel,
 To preach an' read?
 'Na, waur than a'!' cries ilka chiel,
 'Tam Samson's dead!'

* * When this worthy old sportsman went out last muir-fowl season, he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase, 'the last of his fields;' and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried in the muirs. On this hint the author composed his Elegy and Epitaph. R. B.—Burns sent a copy of these verses, prepared for printing, to Mr. Robert Muir, in a letter dated Mossgiel, 18th November, 1786.—"Some one having informed Samson, in his old age, that Burns had written a Poem—'a gay queer one'—concerning him, he sent for the Bard, and, in something like wrath, requested to hear it. He smiled grimly at the relation of his exploits, and then cried out, 'I'm no dead yet, Robin,—I'm worth ten dead fowk; wherefore should ye say that I am dead?' Burns took the hint, retired to the window for a minute or so, and, coming back, recited the 'Per Contra;' with which Tam was so delighted, that he rose unconsciously, rubbed his hands, and exclaimed, 'That'll do—ha, ha—that'll do.' He survived the Poet, and 'the epitaph' is inscribed on his grave in Kilmarnock churchyard."—*Allan Cunningham.* These verses were first printed in the second edition.

† A certain preacher, a great favourite with the million. Vide the 'Ordination,' stanza ii. R. B.

‡ Another preacher, an equal favourite with the few, who was at that time ailing. For him, see also the 'Ordination,' stanza ix. R. B.

Kilmarnock lang may grunt an' grane,
An' sigh, an' sab, an' greet her lane,
An' cleed her bairns, man, wife, an' wean,
In mourning weed ; 10
To Death, she's dearly paid the kane,
'Tam Samson's dead !

The Brethren o' the mystic level
May hing their head in woofu' bevel,
Whilo by their nose the tears will revel,
Like ony bead ;
Death's gien the Lodge an unco devel,
Tam Samson's dead !

When Winter muffles up his cloak,
And binds the mire like a rock ;
When to the loughs the Curlers flock
Wi' gleesome speed,
Wha will they station at the cock,
Tam Samson's dead ?

He was the king of a' the Core,
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore,
Or up the rink like Jehu roar
In time o' need ;
But now he lags on Death's hog-score,
Tam Samson's dead !

Now safe the stately Sawmont sail,
And Trouts bedropp'd wi' crimson hail,
And Eels weel ken'd for souple tail,
And Geds for greed,
Since dark in Death's fish-creel we wail
Tam Samson dead !

Rejoice, ye birring Paitricks a',
 Ye cootie Moorcocks, crouselly craw;
 Ye Maukins, cock your fud fu' braw,
 Withouten dread; 40
 Your mortal Fae is now awa',
 'Tam Samson's dead!

That woefu' morn be ever mourn'd,
 Saw him in shootin graith adorn'd,
 While pointers round impatient burn'd,
 Frae couples freed;
 But, Och! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
 'Tam Samson's dead!.

In vain auld age his body batters;
 In vain the gout his ancles fetters;
 In vain the burns came down like waters, 50
 An acre braid!
 Now ev'ry auld wife, greetin, clatters,
 'Tam Samson's dead!

Owre mony a weary hag he limpit,
 An' ay the tither shot he thumpit,
 Till coward Death behind him jumpit
 Wi' deadly feide;
 Now he proclaims, wi' tout o' trumpet,
 Tam Samson's dead! 60

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
 He reel'd his wonted bottle-swagger,
 But yet he drew the mortal trigger
 Wi' weel-aim'd heed;
 'Lord, five!' he cry'd, an' owre did stagger;
 Tam Samson's dead!

Heav'n rest his saul, whare'er he be !
Is th' wish o' mony mae than me :
He had twa faults, or maybe three,
Yet what remead ?
Ae social, honest man want we :
Tam Samson's dead !

THE EPITAPH.

TAM SAMSON'S weel-worn clay here lies, 90
Ye canting zealots, spare him !
If honest worth in heaven rise,
Ye'll mend or ye win near him.
VOL. I. \ II

PER CONTRA.


Go, Fame, an' canter like a filly
 Thro' a' the streets an' neuks o' Killie,*
 Tell ev'ry social, honest billie
 To cease his grievin,
 For yet, unskait'h'd by Death's gleg gullie,
 Tam Samson's livin !

HALLOWEEN.†

The following Poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood ; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature, in its rude state, in all ages and nations ; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the Author with a perusal, to see the remains of it, among the more unenlightened in our own. R. B.

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
 The simple pleasures of the lowly train ;
 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
 One native charm, than all the gloss of art.

*Goldsmith.*¹

PON that night, when Fairies light
 On Cassilis Downans‡ dance,
 Or owre the lays, in² splendid blaze,
 On sprightly³ coursers prance ;

* Killie is a phrase the country-folks sometimes use for the name of a certain town in the west [Kilmarnock]. R. B.

Or for Colean the route is ta'en,
 Beneath the moon's pale beams ;
 There, up the Cove, § to stray an' rove
 Among the rocks and streams
 To sport that night.

Among the bonie, winding banks, 10
 Where Doon rins, wimplin, clear,
 Where Bruce || ance rul'd the martial ranks,
 An' shook his Carrick spear,
 Some merry, friendly, countra folks,
 Together did convene,
 To burn their nits, an' pou their stocks,
 An' haud their Halloween
 Fu' blythe that night.

VAR. ¹ The variations are from a MS. copy in Burns' own hand.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
 Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

Gray's Elegy. MS.

² with. MS.

³ knightly. MS.

† Halloween is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings are all abroad on their baneful, midnight errands ; particularly those aerial people, the fairies, are said, on that night, to hold a grand anniversary. R. B.

‡ Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis R. B.

§ A noted cavern, near Colean-house, called the Cove of Colean ; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt of fairies. R. B.

|| The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick. R. B.

The lasses feat, an' cleanly*neat,
 Mair braw than when they're fine ; 20
 Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly kythe,
 Hearts leal, an' warm, an' kin :
 The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs,
 Weel knotted on their garten,
 Some unco blate, an' some wi' gabs,
 Gar lasses' hearts gang startin
 Whyles fast at night.

Then, first an' foremost, thro' the kail,
 Their stocks* maun a' be sought anco :
 They steek their een, an' grape an' wale, 30
 For muckle anes, an' straught anes.
 Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
 An' wander'd thro' the bow-kail,
 An' pou't, for want o' better shift,
 A runt was like a sow-tail,
 Sae bow't that night.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
 They roar an' cry a' throu'ther ;

* The first ceremony of Halloween is, pulling each a stock, or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with. Its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any yird, or earth, stick to the root, that is tocher, or fortune; and the taste of the custoc, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their ordinary appellation, the runts, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing the runts, the names in question. R. B.

The vera wee things, toddlin, rin,
 Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther ; 40
 An' gif the custocks sweet or sour,
 Wi' joetelegs they taste them ;
 Syne coziely, aboon the door,
 Wi' cannie care, they've plac'd them
 To lie that night.

The lasses staw frae 'mang them a'
 To pou their stalks o' corn ; *
 But Rab slips out, an' jinks about,
 Behint the muckle thorn :
 He grippet Nelly hard an' fast ; 50
 Loud skirl'd a' the lasses ;
 But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
 When kiutlin i' the fause-house †
 Wi' him that night.

The auld guidwife's weel-hoordet nits ‡
 Are round an' round divided,
 An' monie lads' and lasses' fates
 Are there that night decided :

* They go to the barn-yard, and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the tap-pickle, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed any thing but a maid. R. B.

† When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green, or wet, the stack-buider, by means of old timber, &c. makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fauest exposed to the wind: thus he calls a fause-house. R. B.

‡ Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name the lad and the lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire; and accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be. R. B.

Some kindle couthie, side by side,
 An' burn thegither trimly ; 60
 Some start awa, wi' saucy pride,
 An' jump out-owre the chimlie
 Fu' high that night.

Jean slips in twa, wi' tentie e'e ;
 Wha 'twas, she wadna tell ;
 But this is Jock, and this is me,
 She says in to hersel :
 He bleez'd owre her, an' she owre him,
 As they wad never mair part ;
 Till fizz ! he started up the lum, 70
 An' Jean had e'en a sair heart
 To see't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
 Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie,
 An' Mary, nae doubt, took the drunt,
 To be compar'd to Willie :
 Mall's nit lap out, wi' pridefu' fling,
 An' her ain fit it brunt it ;
 While Willie lap, an' swoor by jing,
 'Twas just the way he wanted 80
 To be that night.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
 She pits hersel an' Rob in ;
 In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
 Till white in ase they're sobbin :
 Nell's heart was dancin at the view ;
 She whisper'd Rob to leuk for't :
 Rob, stownlins, prie'd her bonie mou,
 Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
 Unseen / at night. 90

But Merran sat behint their backs,
 Her thoughts on Andrew Bell ;
 She lea'es them gashin at their cracks,
 An' slips out by hersel :
 She thro' the yard the nearest tak,
 An' to the kiln she goes then,
 An' darklins grapit for the bauks,
 And in the blue-clue* throws then,
 Right fear't that night.

An' aye she win't, an' ay she swat, 100
 I wat she made nae jaukin ;
 Till something held within the pat,
 Guid Lord ! but she was quaukin !
 But whether 'twas the Deil himsel,
 Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
 Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
 She did na wait on talkin
 To spier that night.

Wee Jennie to her Graunie says,
 ' Will ye go wi' me, Graunie ? 110
 ' I'll eat the apple † at the glass,
 ' I gat frae uncle Johnie :'

* Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions: Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and, darkling, throw into the pot a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand, Wha hauds? i.e. who holds? an answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the christian and surname of your future spouse.
 R. B.

† Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion, to be, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder. R. B.

She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
 In wrath she was sae vap'rin,
 She notic't na, an aizle brunt
 Her braw new worset apron
 Out thro' that night.

' Ye little skelpie-limmer's face !
 ' I daur you try sic sportin,
 ' As seek the foul Thief onie place, 120
 ' For him to spae your fortune ?
 ' Nae doubt but ye may get a sight !
 ' Great cause ye hae to fear it ;
 ' For monie a ane has gotten a fright,
 ' An' liv'd an' di'd deleeret,
 ' On sic a night.

' Ae Hairst afore the Sherra-moor,
 ' I mind't as weel's yestreen,
 ' I was a gilpey then, I'm sure
 ' I was na past fyfteen : 130
 ' The simmer had been cauld an' wat,
 ' An' stuff was unco green ;
 ' An' ay a rantin kirn we gat,
 ' An' just on Halloween
 ' It fell that night.

' Our stibble-rig was Rab M'Graen,
 ' A clever, sturdy fallow ;
 ' His sin gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
 ' That liv'd in Auchmacalla ;
 ' He gat hemp-seed,* I mind it weel, 140

* Steal out unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed ;
 harrowing it with anything you can conveniently draw after

‘ An’ he made unco light o’t;
 ‘ But monie a day was by himsel,
 ‘ He was sae sairly frighted
 ‘ That vera night.’

Then up gat fetchin Jamie Fleck,
An' he swoor by his conscience,
That he could saw homp-seed a peck ;
For it was a' but nonsense :
The auld guidman raught down the pock,
An' out a handfu' gied him ;
Synce bad him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Sometime when nae ane see'd him,
An' try't that night.

He marches thro' among the stacks,
Tho' he was something sturtin ;
The graip he for a harrow taks,
An' haurls at his curpin :
An' ev'ry now an' then, he says,
' Hemp-seed, I saw thee,
' An' her that is to be my lass,
' Come after me an' draw thee
 ' As fast this night.'

160

He whistl'd up Lord Lenox' march,
To keep his courage cheary ;

you. Repeat now and then, 'Hemp-seed, I saw thee, hemp-seed, I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true-love, come after me and pou thee.' Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, 'come after me, and shaw thee,' that is, show thyself: in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, 'come after me and harrow thee.' R. B.

Altho' his hair began to arch,
 He was sae fley'd an' eerie:
 Till presently he hears a squeak,
 An' then a grane an' gruntle;
 He by his shouther gae a keek,
 An' tumbl'd wi' a wintle 170
 Out-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
 In dreadfu' desperation!
 An' young an' auld come rinnin out,
 An' hear the sad narration:
 He swoor 'twas hilehin Jean M'Craw,
 Or crouchie Merran Humphie,
 Till stop! she trotted thro' them a':
 An' wha was it but Grumphie
 Asteer that night! 180

Meg fain wad to the barn gaen
 To winn three wechts o' naething;*
 But for to meet the Deil her lane,
 She pat but little faith in:
 She gies the herd a pickle nits,

* This charm must likewise be performed unperceived, and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible; for there is danger, that the *being*, about to appear, may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a wecht; and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life. R. B.

And twa red-cheekit apples,
 To watch, while for the barn she sets,
 In hopes to see Tam Kipples
 That vera night.

She turns the key, wi' cannie thraw, 190
 An' owre the threshold ventures ;
 But first on Sawnie gies a ca',
 Syne bauldly in she enters ;
 A ratton rattl'd up the wa',
 An' she cry'd, Lord preserve her !
 An' ran thro' midden-hole an' a',
 An' pray'd wi' zeal an' fervour,
 Fu' fast that night.

Thy hoy'ie out Will, wi' sair advice ;
 They hecht him some fine braw ane ; 200
 It chane'd the stack he faddom't thrice*
 Was timmer-propt for thrawin :
 He taks a swirlie, auld moss-oak,
 For some black, grousome Carlin ;
 An' loot a winze, an' drew a stroke,
 Till skin in blypes cam haurlin
 Aff's nieves that night.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
 As cantie as a kittlin ;
 But Och ! that night, amang the shaws, 210
 She got a fearfu' settlin !

* Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a Bear-stack, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow. R. B.

The luggies three* are ranged ;
 And ev'ry time great care is taen,
 To see them duly changed :
 Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
 Sin' Mar's-year did desire,
 Because he gat the toom dish thrice,
 He heav'd them on the fire
 In wrath that night.

249

Wi' merry sangs, an' friendly cracks,
 I wat they did na weary ;
 And unco tales, an' funnie jokes,
 Their sports were cheap an' cheary ;
 Till butter'd So'ns,† wi' fragrant lunt,
 Set a' their gabs a-steerin ;
 Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
 They parted aff careerin
 Fu' blythe that night.

250

* Take three dishes ; put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty : blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged ; he (or she) dips the left hand : if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony, a maid : if in the foul, a widow : if in the empty dish, it foretells, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times ; and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered. R.B.

† Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Halloween Supper. R. B.

THE JOLLY BEGGARS.*

A CANTATA.

RECITATIVO.



WHEN lyart leaves bestrew the yird,
 Or, wavering like the bauckie† bird,
 Bedim cauld Boreas' blast :
 When hailstones drive wi' bitter skyte,
 And infant frosts begin to bite,
 In hoary cranreuch drest ;
 Ae night, at e'en, a merry core
 O' randie, gangrel bodies,
 In Poesie-Nansie's held the splore,
 To drink their orra duddies :
 Wi' quaffing and laughing,
 They ranted and they sang ;
 Wi' jumping and thumping,
 The vera girdle rang.

10

* Mr. Allan Cunningham says, this Poem was written in 1785, and satisfactorily shews that, though it is no where mentioned by Burns, it was certainly written by him. He adds that Posie Nansie, in whose house the scene is laid, was the mother of Racer Bess, of the Holy Fair. Her Change house stood in Mauchline, and was the favoured resort of lame sailors, maimed soldiers, wandering tinkers, travelling ballad singers, and vagabonds of that description. 'Nansie' has been already mentioned in a note (ante p. 19), and it has been elsewhere stated, that Burns' companion, when the scene took place which he describes in these verses, was his friend James Smith, (vide p. 68, ante). 'The Jolly Beggars' was not printed in any edition of Burns' works prepared by himself. An interesting account of the scene of 'The Jolly Beggars' is given in the second number of Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.

† The old Scottish name for the bat.

First, aiest the fire, in auld red rags,
 Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,
 And knapsack a' in order ;
 His doxy lay within his arm,
 Wi' usquebae and blankets warm,
 She blinket on her sodger ; 20
 An' aye he gies the towzie drab
 The tither skelpin' kiss,
 While she held up her greedy gab,
 Just like an aumous dish ;
 Ilk smack still, did crack still,
 Just like a cadger's whup,
 Then staggering, and swaggering,
 He roar'd this ditty up—

AIR.

TUNE 'SOLDIER'S JOY.'

I AM a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
 And show my cuts and scars wherever I come ; 30
 This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
 When welcoming the French at the sound of the
 drum.

Lal de daudle, &c.

My 'prentiship I past where my leader breath'd his
 last,
 When the bloody die was cast on the heights of
 Abram ;
 I serv'd out my trade when the gallant game was
 play'd,
 And the Morro low was laid at the sound of the drum.

Lal de daudle, &c.

I lastly was with Curtis, among the floating batt'ries,
 And there I left for witnesses an arm and a limb : 40
 Yet let my country need me, with Elliot to head me,
 I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of the drum.

Lal de daudle, &c.

And now, tho' I must beg, with a wooden arm and leg,
 And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
 I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle, and my
 callet,

As when I us'd in scarlet to follow the drum.

Lal de daudle, &c.

What tho' with hoary locks, I must stand the
 winter shocks,
 Beneath the woods and rocks, oftentimes for a home ; 50
 When the tother bag I sell, and the tother bottle tell,
 I could meet a troop of hell at the sound of the drum.

RECITATIVO.

He ended ; and the kebars sheuk
 Aboon the chorus roar ;
 While frighted rattons backward leuk,
 And seek the benmost bore :

A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
 He skirl'd out encore !
 But up arose the martial chuck,
 And laid the loud uproar.

60

AIR.

TUNE—'SOLDIER LADDIE.'

I ONCE was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
 And still my delight is in proper young men ;

Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c. 70

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch,
So the sword I forsook for the sake of the church;
He ventur'd the soul, I risked the body,
'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

Full soon I grew sick of the sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c. 80

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at a Cunningham fair;
His rags regimental they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoic'd at my sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

And now I have liv'd—I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup or a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass
steady,

Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.

Sing, Lal de lal, &c. 90

RECITATIVO.

Poor Merry Andrew, in the neuk
 Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler hizzie ;
 They mind't na wha the chorus teuk,
 Between themselves they were sae bizzy ;
 At length, wi' drink and courting dizzy,
 He stoitered up an' made a face ;
 Then turn'd, an' laid a smack on Grizzy,
 Syne tun'd his pipes wi' grave grimace.

AIR.

TUNE—'AULD SYR SYMON.'

SIR Wisdom's a fool when he's fou,
 Sir Knave is a fool in a session ; 100
 He's there but a 'prentice I trow,
 But I am a fool by profession.

My grannie she bought me a beuk,
 And I held awa to the school ;
 I fear I my talent misteuk,
 But what will ye hac of a fool ?

For drink I would venture my neck ;
 A hizzie's the half o' my craft ;
 But what could ye other expect,
 Of ane that's avowedly daft ? 110

I ance was ty'd up like a stirk,
 For civilly swearing and quaffing ;
 I ance was abus'd i' the kirk,
 For towzling a lass i' my daffin.

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
 Let naebody name wi' a jeer ;
 There's ev'n I'm tauld i' the court,
 A tumbler ca'd the Premier.

Observ'd ye, yon reverend lad
 Maks faces to tickle the mob ;
 He rails at our mountebank squad,
 It's rivalry just i' the job.

And now my conclusion I'll tell,
 For faith I'm confoundedly dry ;
 The chiel that's a fool for himsel',
 Gude Lord, is far dafter than I.

RECITATIVO.

Then niest outspak a raucle carlin,
 Wha kent fu' weel to cleck the sterling,
 For monie a pursie she had hooked,
 And had in monie a well been dooked ;
 Her dove had been a Highland laddie,
 But weary fa' the waefu' woodie !
 Wi' sighs and sabs, she thus began
 To wail her braw John Highlandman :

AIR.

TUNE—'O, AN YE WERE DEAD, GUIDMAN.'

A HIGHLAND lad my love was born,
 The Lawlan' laws he held in scorn :
 But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
 My gallant braw John Highlandman.

CHORUS

Sing, hey, my braw John Highlandman !
Sing, ho, my braw John Highlandman ! 140
There's no a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.

With his philibeg an' tartan plaid,
And gude claymore down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

We ranged a' from Tweed to Spey,
And liv'd like lords and ladies gay ;
For a Lawlan' face he feared nane, 150
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

They banish'd him beyond the sea,
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

But, oh ! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast ;
My curse upon them every ane, 160
They've hang'd my braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

And now a widow, I must mourn
The pleasures that will ne'er return ;

No comfort but a hearty can,
 When I think on John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

RECITATIVO.

A pigmy Scraper wi' his fiddle,
 Wha us'd at trysts and fairs to driddle,
 Her strappin limb and gaucy middle 170
(He reach'd nae higher),
 Had hol't his heartie like a riddle,
And blawn't on fire.

Wi' hand on haunch, and upward e'e,
 He croon'd his gamut, ane, twa, three,
 Then, in an Arioso key,
• The wee Apollo
 Set aff, wi' Allegretto glee,
His giga solo.

AIR.

TUNE—'WHISTLE OWRE THE LAVE O'T.'

LET me ryke up to dight that tear, 180
 And go wi' me and be my dear,
 And then your every care and fear
May whistle owre the lave o't.

CHORUS.

I am a fiddler to my trade,
 And a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
 The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle owre the lave o't.

At kirns and weddings we'se be there,
 And oh ! sae nicely's we will fare ;
 We'll bouse about, till Daddie Care 190
 Sings whistle owre the lave o't.
 I am, &c.

Sae merrily's the banes we'll pyke,
 And sun oursels about the dyke,
 And at our leisure, when ye like,
 We'll whistle owre the lave o't.
 I am, &c.

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,
 And while I kittle hair on thairms,
 Hunger, cauld, and a' sic harms, 200
 May whistle owre the lave o't.
 I am, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Her charms had struck a sturdy Caird,
 As well as poor gut-scraper ;
 He taks the fiddler by the beard,
 And draws a roosty rapier—

He swoor, by a' was swearing worth,
 To spit him like a pliver,
 Unless he wad from that time forth
 Relinquish her for ever. 210

Wi' ghastly ee, poor tweedle-dee,
 Upon his hunkers bended,
 And pray'd for grace, wi' ruefu' face
 And sae the quarrel ended.

But tho' his little heart did grieve
 When round the tinkler prest her,
 He feign'd to snirtle in his sleeve,
 When thus the Caird address'd her :

AIR.

TUNE—'CLOUT THE CAULDRON.'

My bonnie lass, I work in brass,
 A tinkler is my station ; 220
 I've travell'd round all Christian ground
 In this my occupation ;
 I've ta'en the gold, I've been enroll'd
 In many a noble squadron ;
 But vain they search'd, when off I march'd
 To go and clout the cauldron.
 . • I've ta'en the gold, &c.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
 Wi' a' his noise and caprin,
 And tak a share wi' those that bear 230
 The budget and the apron ;
 And by that stowp, my faith and houp,
 And by that dear Kilbagie,*
 If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
 May I no'er weet my craigie.
 And by that stowp, &c.

RECITATIVO.

The Caird prevail'd—th' unblushing fair
 In his embraces sunk,

* A peculiar sort of Whisky so called ; a great favourite with Poesie-Nansie's clubs.

Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
 And partly she was drunk. 210
 Sir Violino, with an air
 That show'd a man o' spunk,
 Wish'd unison between the pair,
 And made the bottle clunk
 To their health that night.

But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft
 That play'd a dame a shavie,
 The fiddler rak'd her fore and aft,
 Behint the chicken cavie.
 Her lord, a wight o' Homer's craft, 250
 Tho' limpin' wi' the spavie,
 He hirpl'd up, and lap like daft,
 And shor'd them Dainty Davie.
 O boot that night.

He was a care-defying blade
 As ever Bacchus listed,
 Tho' Fortune sair upon him laid,
 His heart she ever miss'd it.
 He had nae wish, but—to be glad.
 Nor want but—when he thirsted; 280
 He hated nought but—to be sad,
 And thus the Muse suggested
 His sang that night.

AIR.

TUNE—'FOR A' THAT, AND A' THAT.'

I AM a bard of no regard
 Wi' gentlefolks, an' a' that ;

But Homer-like, the glowran byke,
Frae town to town I draw that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as meikle's a' that ;
I've lost but ane, I've twa behin', 275
'I've wife enough for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' stank,
Castalia's burn, an' a' that ;
But there it streams, and richly reams,
My Helicon I ca' that.
For a' that, &c.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, an' a' that ;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to thraw that. 280
For a' that, &c.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love, an' a' that ;
But for how lang the flie may stang,
Let inclination law that.
For a' that, &c.

Their tricks and craft hae put me daft,
They've ta'en me in, and a' that ;
But clear your decks, and "Here's the Sex!"
I like the jads for a' that. 290

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as meikle's a' that,

My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
 They're welcome till't, for a' that.

RECITATIVO.

So sung the bard—and Nansie's wa's
 Slook with a thunder of applause,
 Re-echo'd from each mouth ;
 They toom'd their pocks, an' pawn'd their duds,
 They scarcely left to co'er their fuds,
 To quench their lowan drouth. 300

Then owre again, the jovial thrang
 The poet did request,
 To lowse his pack, an' wale a sang,
 A ballad o' the best ;
 He, rising, rejoicing,
 Between his twa Deborahs,
 Looks round him, an' found them
 Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.

TUNE—'JOLLY MORTALS, FILL YOUR GLASSES.'

SEE ! the smoking bowl before us,
 Mark our jovial ragged ring ; 310
 Round and round take up the chorus,
 And in raptures let us sing :

CHORUS.

A fig for those by law protected !
 Liberty's a glorious feast !

Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

What is title? what is treasure?

What is reputation's care?

If we lead a life of pleasure,

'Tis no matter, how or where!

320

A fig, &c.

With the ready trick and fable,

Round we wander all the day;

And at night, in barn or stable,

Hug our doxies on the hay.

A fig, &c.

Does the train-attended carriage

Thro' the country lighter rove?

Does the sober bed of marriage

Witness brighter scenes of love?

330

A fig, &c.

Life is all a variorum,

We regard not how it goes;

Let them cant about decorum

Who have characters to lose.

A fig, &c.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!

Here's to all the wandering train!

Here's our ragged brats and callets!

One and all cry out, Amen!

310

A fig, &c.

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING.
 SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE, MAGGIE,
 ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF
 CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR.



GUID New-Year I wish thee, Maggie!
 Hae, there's a ripp to thy auld baggie:
 Tho' thou's howe-backit, now, an'
 knaggie,

I've seen the day,
 Thou could hae gane like onie staggie
 Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff, an' crazy,
 An' thy auld hide's as white's a daisie,
 I've seen thee dappl't, sleek an' glaiz'd,

A bonie gray: 10
 He should been tight that daur't to raize thee,
 Ane in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
 A filly buirdly, steeve, an' swank,
 An' set weel down a shapely shank,
 As e'er tread yird:
 An' could hae flown out-owre a stank,
 Like onie bird.

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
 Sin' thou was my guid-father's meere; 20
 He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
 An' fifty mark;
 Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
 An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
 Ye then was trottin wi' your minnie
 Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
 Ye ne'er was donsie ;
 But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
 An' unco sonsie.

30

That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
 When ye bure hame my bonie bride ;
 An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,
 Wi' maiden air !
 Kyle-Stewart I could bragged wide,
 For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte and hoble,
 An' wintle like a saumont-coble,
 That day ye was a jinker noble,
 For heels an' win' !
 An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
 Far, far behin'.

40

When thou an' I were young and skeigh,
 An' stable-meals at fairs were driegh,
 How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skrieigh
 An' tak the road !
 Town's bodies ran, and stood abeigh,
 An' ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
 We took the road ay like a swallow :
 At Brooses thou had ne'er a fellow,
 For pith an' speed ;
 But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
 Whare'er thou gaed.

50

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle,
 Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle ;
 But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
 An' gart them whaizle :
 Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
 O' saugh or hazel.

60

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',
 As e'er in tug or tow was drawn !
 Aft thee an' I, in aught hours gaun,
 On guid March-weather,
 Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han',
 For days thegither.

Thou never braing't, an' fetch't, an' fliskit,
 But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
 An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd furiskit,
 Wi' pith an' pow'r,
 Till spritty knowes wad rair't and riskit,
 An' slypet owre.

70

When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep,
 An' threaten'd labour back to keep,
 I gied thy cog a wee-bit heap
 Aboon the timmer ;
 I ken'd my Maggie wad na sleep
 For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit ;
 The steyst brae thou wad hae face't it ;
 Thou never lap, an' sten't, and breastit,
 Then stood to blaw ;
 But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
 Thou snoov't awa.

80

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a' :
 Four gallant brutes as o'er did draw ;
 Forbye sax mae, I've sell't awa,
 That thou hast nurst :
 They drew me thretteen pund an' twa,
 The vera warst.

90

Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought,
 An' wi' the weary warl' fought !
 An' monie an anxious day, I thought
 We wad be beat !
 Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
 Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld, trusty servan',
 That now perhaps thou's less deservin,
 An' thy auld days may end in starvin,
 For my last fou,
 A heapit stimpert, I'll reserve ane
 Laid by for you.

100

We've worn to crazy years thegither ;
 We'll toyte about wi' ane anither ;
 Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether
 To some hain'd rig,
 Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,
 Wi' sma' fatigue.

TO A MOUSE, ON TURNING HER UP IN
HER NEST, WITH THE PLOUGH,
NOVEMBER, 1785.*

WEE, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie !
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle !
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle !

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle, 10
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal !

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thiefe ;
What then ? poor beastie, thou maun live !
A daimen-icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request :
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
And never miss't !

* "The verses to the 'Mouse and Mountain Daisy' were composed," says Gilbert Burns, "on the occasions mentioned, and while the author was holding the plough: I could point out the particular spot where each was composed. Holding the plough was a favourite situation with Robert for poetic compositions, and some of his best verses were produced while he was at that exercise."

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin !
 Its silly wa's the win's are strewin ! 20
 An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
 O' foggage green !
 An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
 Baith snell an' keen !

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
 An' weary winter comin fast,
 An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell,
 Till crash ! the cruel coulter past,
 Out thro' thy cell. 30

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
 Has cost thee mony a weary nibble !
 Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
 But house or hald,
 To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
 An' cranreuch cauld !

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
 In proving foresight may be vain :
 The best laid schemes o' mice an' men,
 Gang aft a-gley, 40
 An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
 For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me !
 The present only toucheth thee :
 But, Och ! I backward cast my e'e
 On prospects drear !
 An' forward, tho' I canna see,
 I guess an' fear !

A WINTER NIGHT.*

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm!
 How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
 Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you,
 From seasons such as these?—

Shakespeare.

WHEN biting Boreas, fell and doure,
 Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r;
 When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd glow'r,
 Far south the lift,
 Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r,
 Or whirling urift:

Ac night the storm the steeples rocked,
 Poor labour sweet in sleep was locked,
 While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
 Wild-eddying swirl, 10
 On thro' the mining outlet bocked,
 Down headlong hurl.

List'ning, the doors an' winnocks rattle,
 I thought me on the ourie cattle,
 Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
 O' winter war,
 And thro' the drift, deep-lairing sprattle,
 Beneath a scar.

* First printed in the second edition 1787.

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing !
 That, in the merry months o' spring, 20
 Delighted me to hear thee sing,

What comes o' thee ?
 Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
 An' close thy e'e ?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
 Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
 The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote spoil'd,
 My heart forgets,
 While pityless the tempest wild
 Sore on you beats. 30

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
 Dark muff'd, view'd the dreary plain ;
 Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
 Rose in my soul,
 When on my ear this plaintive strain,
 Slow, solemn, stole—

' Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust !
 ' And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost !
 ' Descend, ye chills, smothering snows !
 ' Not all your rage, as now, united shows 40
 ' More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
 ' Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
 Than heav'n-illumin'd man on brother man be-
 ' stows !
 ' See stern oppression's iron grip,
 ' Or mad ambition's gory hand,
 ' Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
 ' Woe, want, and murder o'er a land !

‘ Ev’n in the peaceful rural vale,
‘ Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
‘ How pamper’d luxury, flatt’ry by her side, 50
‘ The parasite empoisoning her ear,
‘ With all the servile wretches in the rear,
‘ Looks o’er proud property, extended wide ;
‘ And eyes the simple rustic hind,
‘ Whose toil upholds the glitt’ring show,
‘ A creature of another kind,
‘ Some coarser substance, unrefin’d,
‘ Plac’d for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below !

‘ Where, where is love’s fond, tender throe,
‘ With lordly honour’s lofty brow, 60
‘ The pow’rs you proudly own ?
‘ Is there, beneath love’s noble name,
‘ Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
‘ To bless himself alone !
‘ Mark maiden-innocence a prey
‘ To love-pretending snares,
‘ This boasted honour turns away,
‘ Shunning soft pity’s rising sway,
‘ Regardless of the tears, and unavailing pray’rs !
‘ Perhaps, this hour, in mis’ry’s squalid nest, 70
‘ She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
‘ And with a mother’s fears shrinks at the rocking
blast !

‘ Oh ye ! who, sunk in beds of down,
‘ Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
‘ Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
‘ Whom friends and fortune quite disown !
‘ Ill-satisfied keen nature’s clam’rous call,
‘ Stretch’d on his straw helays himself to sleep,


‘ While thro’ the ragged roof and chinky wall,
 ‘ Chill o’er his slumbers, piles the drift heap !
 ‘ Think on the dungeon’s grim confine, st
 ‘ Where guilt and poor misfortune pine !
 ‘ Guilt, erring man, relenting view !
 ‘ But shall thy legal rage pursue
 ‘ The wretch, already crushed low
 ‘ By cruel fortune’s undeserved blow ?
 Affliction’s sons are brothers in distress,
 A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss !’

I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
 Shook off the pouthery snaw. 99
 And hail’d the morning with a cheer,
 A cottage-rousing crew.

But deep this truth impress’d my mind—
 Thro’ all His works abroad,
 The heart, benevolent and kind,
 The most resembles God.

EPISTLE TO DAVIE,* A BROTHER POET.

January, 1781.


 HILE winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
 And bar the doors wi’ driving snaw,
 And hing us owre the ingle,
 I set me down, to pass the time,

* “Davie” was David Sillar, one of the club at Tarbolton and author of a volume of poems in the Scottish dialect, printed at Kilmarnock, in 8vo. in 1789, wherein is an ‘Epistle to R. Burns,’ which will be found in the Appendix, together with his verses on Burns’ Calf. “Sillar was,” says Allan

And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
 In hamely, westlin jingle.
 While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
 Ben to the chimla lug,
 I grudge a wee the great-folk's gift,
 That live sae bien an' snug :
 I tent less, and want less
 Their roomy fire-side ;
 But hanker and canker,
 To see their cursed pride.

10

Cunningham, "a scholar and a poet, and was one of the magistrates of Irvine; but when acquainted with the Burns' family, he kept the parish school."

"Among the earliest of his Poems," says Gilbert Burns in a letter to Dr. Currie, in April, 1798, "was the 'Epistle to Davie.' Robert often composed without any regular plan. When anything made a strong impression on his mind, so as to rouse it to poetic exertion, he would give way to the impulse, and embody the thought in rhyme. If he lit on two or three stanzas to please him, he would then think of proper introductory, connecting, and concluding stanzas: hence the middle of a poem was often first produced. It was, I think, in summer, 1784, when, in the interval of harder labour, he and I were weeding in the garden (kailyard), that he repeated to me the principal part of this epistle. I believe the first idea of Robert's becoming an author was started on this occasion. I was much pleased with the epistle, and said to him I was of opinion it would bear being printed, and that it would be well received by people of taste; that I thought it at least equal, if not superior, to many of Allan Ramsay's epistles; and that the merit of these, and much other Scottish poetry, seemed to consist principally in the knack of the expression; but here there was a strain of interesting sentiment, and the Scotticism of the language scarcely seemed affected, but appeared to be the natural language of the poet; that, besides, there was certainly some novelty in a poet pointing out the consolations that were in store for him when he should go a-begging. Robert seemed very well pleased with my criticism, and we talked of sending it to some magazine; but as this plan afforded no opportunity of knowing how it would take, the idea was dropped."

It's hardly in a body's pow'r,
 To keep, at times, frae being sour,
 To see how things are shar'd ;
 How best o' chiels are whyles in want,
 While coofs on countless thousands rant,
 And ken na how to wair't : 20
 But, Davie, lad, ne'er fash your head,
 Tho' we hae little gear,
 We're fit to win our daily bread,
 As lang's we're hale and fier :
 ' Mair spier na, nor fear na,' *
 Auld age ne'er mind a feg,
 The last o't, the warst o't,
 Is only but to beg.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
 When banes are craz'd, and bluid is thin, 30
 Is, doubtless, great distress !
 Yet then content could mak us blest ;
 Ev'n then, sometimes, we'd snatch a taste
 Of truest happiness.
 The honest heart that's free frae a'
 Intended fraud or guile,
 However fortune kick the ba',
 Has aye some cause to smile :
 And mind still, you'll find still,
 A comfort this nae sma' ; 40
 Nae mair then, we'll care then,
 Nae farther can we fa'.

What tho', like commoners of air,
 We wander out, we know not where,

But either house or hal' ?
 Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
 The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
 Are free alike to all.

In days when daisies deck the ground,
 And blackbirds whistle clear,
 With honest joy our hearts will bound,
 To see the coming year :

50

On braes when we please, then,
 We'll sit and sowth a tune ;
 Syne rhyme till't, we'll time till't.
 And sing't when we hae done.

It's no in titles nor in rank ;
 It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,

To purchase peace and rest ;
 It's no in making muckle, *mair* :

" 60

It's no in books ; it's no in lear,
 To make us truly blest :

If happiness hae not her seat
 And centre in the breast,

We may be wise, or rich, or great,
 But never can be blest :

Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
 Could make us happy lang ;

The heart aye's the part aye,
 That maks us right or wrang.

70

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
 Wha drudge and drive thro' wet an' dry

Wi' never-ceasing toil ;
 Think ye, are we less blest than they.
 Wha scarcely tent us in their way,

As hardly worth their while ?
 Alas ! how aft in haughty mood,
 God's creatures they oppress !
 Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
 They riot in excess !

80

Baith careless, and fearless,
 Of either heav'n or hell !
 Esteeming, and deeming
 It's a' an idle tale !

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce ;
 Nor make our scanty pleasures less,

By pining at our state ;
 And, even should misfortunes come,
 I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
 An's thankfu' for them yet.

80

They gie the wit of age to youth ;
 They let us ken oursel ;

They mak us see the naked truth,
 The real guid and ill.

'Tho' losses, and crosses,
 Be lessons right severe,
 There's wit there, ye'll get there,
 Ye'll find nae other where.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts !

(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes, 10
 And flatt'ry I detest)

This life has joys for you and I ;
 And joys that riches ne'er could buy ;
 And joys the very best.

There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
 The lover an' the frien' ;

Ye hae your Meg,* your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean !

It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her name : 110
It heats me, it beets me,
And sets me a' on flame !

O all ye Pow'rs who rule above !
O Thou, whose very self art love !
Thou know'st my words sincere !
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear !

When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest, 120
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast.
Thou Being, All-seeing,
O hear my fervent pray'r ;
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care !

All hail, ye tender feelings dear !
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow !
Long since, this world's thorny ways 130
Had number'd out my weary days,
Had it not been for you !
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
In every care and ill ;

* Allan Cunningham states, that "Meg" was Margaret Orr, the nursery-maid of Mrs. Stewart of Stair.

And oft a more endearing band,
A tie more tender still.
It lightens, it brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with, and greet with
My Davie or my Jean. .

149

O, how that name inspires my style !
The words come skelpin, rank and file,
Amaist before I ken !
The ready measure rins as fine,
As Phœbus and the famous Nine
Were glowrin owre my pen.
My spaviet Pegasus will limp,
Till ance he's fairly hot ;
And then he'll hileh, and stilt, and jimp,
'An' rin an unco fit :
But lest then, the beast then,
Should rue this hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty, wizen'd hide.

150

THE LAMENT.*

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

Alas! how oft does Goodness wound itself,
 And sweet AFFECTION prove the spring of woe!
Home.



THOU pale Orb, that silent shines,
 While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
 Thou seest a wretch that, inly pines,
 And wanders here to wail and weep!
 With woe I nightly vigils keep,
 Beneath thy wan unwarming beam;
 And mourn, in lamentation deep,
 How life and love are all a dream.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
 The faintly marked, distant hill: 10
 I joyless view thy trembling horn,
 Reflected in the gurgling rill:

* "It is," says Gilbert Burns, "scarcely necessary to mention, that 'The Lament' was composed on that unfortunate passage in his matrimonial history, which I have mentioned in my letter to Mrs. Dunlop, after the first distraction of his feelings had a little subsided." Mr. Allan Cunningham (vol. vii. p. 107) has successfully refuted the statement of Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, that 'The Lament,' as well as the song 'Had I a cave,' proceeded from a different cause.

My fondly-fluttering heart, be still !
Thou busy pow'r, Remembrance, cease !
Ah ! must the agonizing thrill
For ever bar returning peace !

No idly-feign'd poetic pains,
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim ;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains ;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame : 20
The plighted faith ; the mutual flame ;
The oft attested pow'rs above ;
The promis'd father's tender name :
These were the pledges of my love !

Encircled in her clasping arms,
How have the raptur'd moments flown !
How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,
For her dear sake, and her's alone !
And must I think it ! is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast ? 30
And does she heedless hear my groan ?
And is she ever, ever lost ?

Oh ! can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honour, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth !
Alas ! life's path may be unsmooth !
Her way may lie thro' rough distress !
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less ? 40

Ye winged hours that o'er us past,
Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,

Your dear remembrance in my breast,
My fondly-treasur'd thoughts employ'd.
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her too scanty once of room !
Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd,
And not a wish to gild the gloom !

The morn that warns th' approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe : 50
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant, western main.

And when my nightly couch I tly,
Sore harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly thief : 60
Or if I slumber, fancy, chief,
Reigns, haggard-wild, in sore affright :
Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief,
From such a horror-breathing night.

O ! thou bright Queen, who o'er th' expanse
Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway !
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Observ'd us, fondly-wand'ring, stray !
The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high, 70
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual-kindling eye.

Oh ! scenes in strong remembrance set !
 Scenes, never, never to return !
 Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
 Again I feel, again I burn !
 From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
 Life's weary vale I'll wander thro' ;
 And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
 A faithless woman's broken vow.

80

DESPONDENCY.

AN ODE.



OPPRESS'D with grief, oppress'd with care,
 A burden more than I can bear,
 I sit me down and sigh :
 O life ! thou art a galling load
 Along a rough, a weary road,
 To wretches such as I !
 Dim backward as I cast my view,
 What sick'ning scenes appear !
 What sorrows yet may pierce me thro',
 Too justly I may fear !
 Still caring, despairing,
 Must be my bitter doom ;
 My woes here shall close no'er,
 But with the closing tomb !

10

Happy, ye sons of busy life,
 Who, equal to the bustling strife,
 No other view regard !

Ev'n when the wished end's deny'd,
Yet while the busy means are ply'd,
They bring their own reward : 20
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
Unfitted with an aim,
Meet ev'ry sad returning night,
And joyless morn the same ;
You, bustling, and justling,
Forget each grief and pain :
I, listless, yet restless,
Find every prospect vain.

How blest the Solitary's lot,
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot, 30
Within his humble cell,
The cavern wild with tangling roots,
Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,
Beside his crystal well !
Or, haply, to his ev'ning thought,
By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
A faint-collected dream :
While praising, and raising
His thoughts to Heav'n on high, 40
As wand'ring, meand'ring,
He views the solemn sky.

Than I, no lonely hermit plac'd
Where never human footstep trac'd,
Less fit to play the part ;
The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop, and just to move,
With self-respecting art :

But ah ! those pleasures, loves, and joys,
Which I too keenly taste, 50
The Solitary can despise,
Can want, and yet be blest !
He needs not, he heeds not,
Or human love or hate,
Whilst I here must cry here,
At perfidy ingrate !

Oh ! enviable, early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
To care, to guilt unknown !
How ill exchange'd for riper times, 60
To feel the follies, or the crimes,
Of others, or my own !
Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnets in the bush,
Ye little know the ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish !
The losses, the crosses,
That active man engage !
The fears all, the tears all,
Of dim-declining age ! 70

WINTER.

A DIRGE.

In Burns' Memoranda, written in April, 1784, he observes, "As I am what the men of the world, if they knew such a man, would call a whimsical mortal, I have various sources of pleasure and enjoyment, which are, in a manner, peculiar to myself, or some here and there such other out-of-the-way person. Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of WINTER, more than the rest of the year. This, I believe, may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast: but there is something even in the

'Mighty tempest, and the hoary waste,
Abrupt, and deep stretch'd o'er the buried earth,'

which raises the mind to a serious sublimity favourable to every thing great and noble. There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to *Him*, who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, 'walks on the wings of the wind.' In one of these seasons, just after a train of misfortunes, I composed the following:"



HE wintry west extends his blast
And hail and rain does blaw,
Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While, tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.


"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"*
 The joyless winter-day, 10
 Let others fear, to me more dear
 Than all the pride of May:
 The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
 My griefs it seems to join;
 The leafless trees my fancy please,
 Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Pow'r Supreme, whose mighty scheme
 These woes of mine fulfil,
 Here, firm, I rest, they must be best,
 Because they are Thy will! 20
 Then all I want (Oh! do Thou grant
 This one request of mine!)
 Since to enjoy Thou dost deny,
 Assist me to resign.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.†

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ. OF AYR.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
 Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
 The short but simple annals of the Poor.—*Gray*.

 Y lov'd, my honour'd, much respected
 friend,
 No mercenary bard his homage pays;
 With honest pride, I scorn each selfish
 end;
 My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:

* Dr. Young. R. B.

† In a letter from Gilbert Burns to Dr. Currie, in April, 1798, he says, "Robert had frequently remarked to me, that

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
 The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene ;
 The native feelings strong, the guileless ways ;
 What Aiken in a cottage would have been ;
 Ah ! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I
 ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh ; 10
 The short'ning winter-day is near a close ;
 The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh ;
 The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose :
 The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
 This night his weekly moil is at an end,
 Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
 Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
 And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hame-
 ward bend.

he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, 'Let us worship God,' used by a decent sober head of a family introducing family worship. To this sentiment of the author the world is indebted for the 'Cotter's Saturday Night.' The hint of the plan, and title of the poem, were taken from Fergusson's 'Farmer's Ingle.' When Robert had not some pleasure in view in which I was not though fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together when the weather was favourable on the Sunday afternoons (those precious breathing-times to the labouring part of the community), and enjoyed such Sundays as would make one regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks that I first had the pleasure of hearing the author repeat the 'Cotter's Saturday Night.' I do not recollect to have read or heard anything by which I was more highly electrified. The fifth and sixth stanzas, and the eighteenth, thrilled with peculiar ecstasy through my soul."

In a subsequent letter, in October, 1800, Gilbert Burns observed, "I wish likewise to take notice, in passing, that although the 'Cotter,' in the Saturday Night, is an exact copy of my father in his manners, his family devotion, and

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun' ;
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin so
A cannie errand to a neebor town :
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

exhortations, yet the other parts of the description do not apply to our family. None of us were ever 'at service out among the neebors round.' Instead of our depositing our 'sair-won penny fee' with our parents, my father laboured hard, and lived with the most rigid economy, that he might be able to keep his children at home, thereby having an opportunity of watching the progress of our young minds, and forming in them early habits of piety and virtue; and from this motive alone did he engage in farming, the source of all his difficulties and distresses."

It is evident from the Poet's letter to John Richmond, in February, 1786, already quoted, that 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' was written sometime before that date. In the first and second edition, this poem immediately follows 'The Auld Farmer's New-Year Morning's Salutation;' but, perhaps from its popularity, it was placed at the commencement of the second volume of the next edition of the poet's works, printed in 1793.

Wi' joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears; 40
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaisht as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The youngkers a' are warned to obey;
An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play;
' An' Oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway, 50
' An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
' Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
' Implore His counsel and assisting might:
' They never sought in vain that sought the Lord
aright!'

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek; 60
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worth-
less rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappan youth; he takes the mother's eye;

Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en ;
 The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
 The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy.
 But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave ;
 The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy 70
 What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave ;
 Weel pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the
 lave.

O happy love ! where love like this is found !
 O heart-felt raptures ! bliss beyond compare !
 I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
 And sage experience bids me this declare—
 ' If Heav'n a draught of heav'nly pleasure spare,
 ' One cordial in this melancholy vale,
 ' 'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
 ' In others arms breathe out the tender tale, 80
 ' Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the
 ev'ning gale.'

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
 A wretch ! a villain ! lost to love and truth !
 That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
 Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth ?
 Curse on his perjur'd arts ! dissembling smooth !
 Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd ?
 Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
 Points to the parents fondling o'er their child ?
 Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction
 wild ! 90

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
 The wholesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food :

The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
 That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood ;
 The dame brings forth in complimental mood,
 To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell,
 An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid ;
 The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
 How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the
 bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face, 100
 They, round the ingle, form a circle wide ;
 The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
 The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride :
 His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
 His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare ;
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
 He wales a portion with judicious care ;
 And 'Let us worship God !' he says, with solemn
 air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim :
 Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise, 111
 Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name ;
 Or noble Elgin beets the heav'nward flame,
 The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays :
 Compar'd with these, Italian thrills are tame ;
 The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise ;
 Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
 How Abram was the friend of God on high ;
 Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage 120

With Amalek's ungracious progeny ;
 Or how the royal Bard did groaning lie
 Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire ;
 Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry ;
 Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire ;
 Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
 How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed ;
 How He, who bore in Heav'n the second name,
 Had not on earth whereon to lay His head : 130
 How His first followers and servants sped ;
 The precepts sage they wrote to many a land :
 How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
 Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand ;
 And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by
 Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays :
 Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'*
 That thus they all shall meet in future days :
 There ever bask in uncreated rays, 140
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,
 In such society, yet still more dear ;
 While circling time moves round in an eternal
 sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
 In all the pomp of method, and of art,
 When men display to congregations wide

* Pope's 'Windsor Forest.' R. B.

Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart !
The Pow'r, inconst'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ; 150
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the soul ;
And in His book of life the inmates poor enrol .

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way ;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest :
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best, 160
For them and for their little ones provide ;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur
springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad :
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
' An honest man's the noblest work of God : '
And certes, in fair virtue's heav'nly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind ;
What is a lordling's pomp ! a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind, 170
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd !

O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !
For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent !
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet
content !

And, Oh, may Heav'n their simple lives prevent
 From luxury's contagion, weak and vile !
 Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
 A virtuous populace may rise the while,
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd
 Isle. 180

O Thou ! who pour'd the patriotic tide
 That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart ;¹
 Who dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
 Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
 (The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art,
 His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward !)
 O never, never, Scotia's realm desert ;
 But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
 In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard !

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.*

A DIRGE.

WHEN chill November's surly blast
 Made fields and forests bare,
 One ev'ning, as I wander'd forth
 Along the banks of Ayr,

VAR. ¹ That stream'd thro' great unhappy Wallace' heart.
1st and 2nd Edit.

* Gilbert Burns informed Dr. Currie, that "several of the poems were produced for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the author. He used to remark to me, that he could not well conceive a more mortifying picture of human life than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how this sentiment might be brought forward, the elegy 'Man was made to mourn' was composed."

Mr. Lockhart has justly observed, that "whatever might be

I spy'd a man, whose aged step
Seem'd weary, worn with care ;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou ?
Began the rev'rend sage ; 10
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage ?
Or, haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The miseries of Man.

The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride ; 20
I've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return ;
And ev'ry time has added proofs,
That Man was made to mourn.

O man ! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time !
Mis-spending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime !

the casual idea that set the Poet to work, it is evident that he wrote from the habitual feelings of his own bosom." Burns says, in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, that his mother often sang, "The Life and Age of Man;" and it is certain that the ballad made a deep impression upon his mind. A copy of it, taken from Mrs. Burns' recitation, and printed in Cromek's "Select Scottish Songs," vol. i. p. 6, will be found in the Appendix. 'Man was made to mourn' immediately precedes 'Winter' in the first and second editions.

Alternate follies take the sway ;
Licentious passions burn ; 30
Which tenfold force give nature's law,
That Man was made to mourn.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might ;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right.
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn,
Then age and want, Oh ! ill-match'd pair !
Show Man was made to mourn. 40

A few seem favourites of fate,
In pleasure's lap carest ;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.
But, Oh ! what crowds in ev'ry land
Are wretched and forlorn ;
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
That Man was made to mourn.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frame ! 50
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame !
And man, whose heav'n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn !

See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,

Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil ; 60
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave,
By nature's law design'd,
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind ?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty, or scorn ? 70
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn ?

Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast :
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the last !
The poor, oppressed, honest man
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn ! 80

O Death ! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best !
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest !
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn ;
But, Oh ! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn !

A PRAYER, IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.*



THOU unknown, Almighty Cause
 Of all my hope and fear !
 In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
 Perhaps I must appear !

If I have wander'd in those paths
 Of life I ought to shun ;
 As something, loudly in my breast,
 Remonstrates I have done ;

Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me
 With passions wild and strong ; 10
 And list'ning to their witching voice
 Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
 Or frailty stept aside,
 Do Thou, All-Good ! for such Thou art,
 In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
 No other plea I have,
 But, Thou art good ; and Goodness still
 Delighteth to forgive. 20

* In Burns' Memoranda, dated in August, and apparently in 1784, the following passage is prefixed to these verses :

"A prayer, when fainting fits, and other alarming symptoms of pleurisy, or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threatens me, first put nature on the alarm."

Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
 And still the tumult of the raging sea :
 With that controuling pow'r assist ev'n me,
 Those headlong furious passions to confine,¹
 For all unfit I feel my powers to be,²
 To rule their torrent in th' allowed line ;
 O, aid me with Thy help, Omnipotence Divine !

LYING AT A REVEREND FRIEND'S HOUSE

ONE NIGHT, THE AUTHOR LEFT THE FOLLOWING
 VERSES IN THE ROOM WHERE HE SLEPT.*



THOU dread Pow'r, who reign'st above !
 I know Thou wilt me hear ;
 When for this scene of peace and love,
 I make my pray'r sincere.

The hoary sire—the mortal stroke,
 Long, long, be pleas'd to spare ;
 To bless his little filial flock,
 And show what good men are.

VAR. ¹ Those rapid headlong passions to confine.

² For all unfit my native powers be.

* "The first time," says Gilbert Burns, "Robert heard the spinnet played upon was at the house of Dr. Laurie, then minister of the parish of Loudon, now in Glasgow, having given up the parish in favour of his son. Dr. Laurie has several daughters; one of them played; the father and mother led down the dance; the rest of the sisters, the brother, the poet, and the other guests, mixed in it. It was a delightful family scene for our poet, then lately introduced to the world. His mind was roused to a poetic enthusiasm, and the stanzas were left in the room where he slept." These stanzas are not in the first edition.


She, who her lovely offspring eyes
 With tender hopes and fears, 10
 O, bless her with a mother's joys,
 But spare a mother's tears !

Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,
 In manhood's dawning blush ;
 Bless him, Thou God of love and truth,
 Up to a parent's wish.

The beauteous, seraph sister-band,
 With earnest tears I pray,
 Thou know'st the snares on ev'ry hand,
 Guide Thou their steps alway. 20

When soon or late they reach that coast,
 O'er life's rough ocean driv'n,
 May they rejoice, no wand'rer lost,
 A family in Heav'n !

THE FIRST PSALM.*

 HE man, in life wherever plac'd,
 Hath happiness in store,
 Who walks not in the wicked's way,
 Nor learns their guilty lore !

Nor from the seat of scornful pride
 Casts forth his eyes abroad,
 But with humility and awe
 Still walks before his God.

* First printed in the second edition in 1787.

That man shall flourish like the trees
 Which by the streamlets grow ; 10
 The fruitful top is spread on high,
 And firm the root below.

But he whose blossom buds in guilt
 Shall to the ground be cast,
 And like the rootless stubble tost,
 Before the sweeping blast.

For why ? that God the good adore
 Hath giv'n them peace and rest,
 But hath decreed that wicked men
 Shall ne'er be truly blest. 20

A PRAYER, UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

That the anguish of mind under which this 'Prayer' (which was first printed in the second edition) was written was real, is shown by the remarks attached to it in Burns' Memoranda :

" March, 1784.

" There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened, and indeed effected, the utter ruin of my fortune. My body too was attacked by that most dreadful disorder, a hypochondria or confirmed melancholy. In this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following : "



THOU Great Being ! what Thou art
 Surpasses me to know :
 Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
 Are all Thy works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,
 All wretched and distrest ;
 Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
 Obey Thy high behest.

Sure, Thou, Almighty, canst not act
 From cruelty or wrath ! 10
 O, free my weary eyes from tears,
 Or close them fast in death !

But if I must afflicted be,
 To suit some wise design ;
 Then, man my soul with firm resolves
 To bear and not repine !

THE FIRST SIX VERSES OF THE NINETIETH PSALM.*



THOU, the first, the greatest friend
 Of all the human race !
 Whose strong right hand has ever been
 Their stay and dwelling-place !

Before the mountains heav'd their heads
 Beneath Thy forming hand,
 Before this pond'rous globe itself,
 Arose at Thy command ;

That pow'r which rais'd and still upholds
 This universal frame, 10
 From countless, unbeginning time
 Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years
Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before Thy sight
Than yesterday that's past.

Thou giv'st the word ; Thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought ;
Again Thou say'st, ' Ye sons of men,
' Return ye into nought !'

20

Thou layest them, with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep ;
As with a flood Thou tak'st them off
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flow'r,
In beauty's pride array'd ;
But long ere night cut down it lies
All wither'd and decay'd.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH,
IN APRIL, 1786.†



WEE, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour ;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem.
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonie gem.

* See the note on Verses to a Mouse, p. 128 ante.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonie Lark, companion meet
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weat!
 Wi' spreckl'd breast, 10
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
 The purpling cast.

Could blew the bitter-biting north
 Upon thy early, humble birth ;
 Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
 Amid the storm,
 Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
 Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield, 20
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawy bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
 In humble guise ;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
 And low thou lies !


Such is the fate of artless Maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade !
By love's simplicity betray'd,
 And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
 Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
 On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd !
 Unskilful he to note the card
 Of prudent lore, 40
 Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And overwhelm him o'er !

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
 Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
 By human pride or cunning driv'n
 To mis'ry's brink,
 Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
 He, ruin'd, sink !

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
 That fate is thine—no distant date ; 50
 Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
 Full on thy bloom,
 Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
 Shall be thy doom !

TO RUIN.*

LL hail ! inexorable lord !
 At whose destruction-breathing word,
 The mightiest empires fall !
 Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,

* It appears, from internal evidence, that these lines were written in 1786. The "dart" that

 " —cut my dearest tie,
 And quivers in my heart,"

is evidently an allusion to his separation from Jean Armour. Allan Cunningham, however, attributes these verses to the failure of his farming speculations.

The ministers of grief and pain,
A sullen welcome, all !
With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
I see each aimed dart ;
For one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart.

10

Then low'ring, and pouring,
The storm no more I dread ;
Tho' thick'ning and black'ning
Round my devoted head.

And, thou grim pow'r, by life abhorr'd,
While life a pleasure can afford,
Oh ! hear a wretch's pray'r !
No more I shrink appall'd, afraid ;
-I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
To close this scene of care !

20

When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Resign life's joyless day ;
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
Cold mould'ring in the clay ;
No fear more, no tear more,
To stain my lifeless face,
Enclasped, and grasped
Within thy cold embrace !

TO MISS LOGAN,* WITH BEATTIE'S POEMS,
FOR A NEW YEAR'S GIFT, JANUARY 1, 1787.

A GAIN the silent wheels of time
 Their annual round have driv'n,
 And you, tho' scarce in maiden prime,
 Are so much nearer Heav'n.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
The infant year to hail ;
I send you more than India boasts,
In Edwin's simple tale.

Our sex with guile and faithless love
Is charg'd, perhaps too true ;
But may, dear Maid, each lover prove
An Edwin still to you !

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.†

MAY, 1786.

LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve nae ither end
Than just a kind memento ;

* Miss Susan Logan, who was "the sentimental sister Susie" of the Epistle to Major Logan. She sang with taste and feeling, and, with her brother, cheered the Bard in many of his desponding hours."—*Allan Cunningham*. These verses were first printed in the second edition.

† The friend to whom this Epistle was addressed, was Andrew Aiken of Ayr, son of Robert Aiken, to whom Burns inscribed 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.'

But how the subject-theme may gang,
 Let time and chance determine ;
 Perhaps, it may turn out a sang,
 Perhaps, turn out a sermon.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad,
 And, Andrew dear, believe me, 19
 Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
 And muckle they may grieve ye :
 For care and trouble set your thought,
 Ev'n when your end's attained ;
 And a' your views may come to nought,
 Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

I'll no say, men are villains a' ;
 The real, harden'd wicked,
 Wha hae nae check but human law,
 Are to a few restricked : 20
 But Och ! mankind are unco weak,
 An' little to be trusted ;
 If self the wavering balance shake,
 It's rarely right adjusted !

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,
 Their fate we should na censure,
 For still th' important end of life
 They equally may answer ;
 A man may hae an honest heart,
 Tho' poortith hourly stare him ; 30
 A man may tak a neebor's part,
 Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Aye free, aff han' your story tell,
 When wi' a bosom crony ;

But still keep something to yoursel
 Ye scarcely tell to ony.
 Conceal yoursel as weel's ye can
 Frae critical dissection ;
 But keek thro' ev'ry other man,
 Wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection.

40

The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,
 Luxuriantly indulge it ;
 But never tempt th' illieit rove,
 Tho' naething should divulge it ;
 I wave the quantum o' the sin,
 The hazard o' concealing ;
 But Och ! it hardens a' within,
 And petrifies the feeling !

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
 Assiduous wait upon her ;
 And gather gear by ev'ry wile
 That's justify'd by honour ;
 Not for to hide it in a hedge,
 Nor for a train attendant ;
 But for the glorious privilege
 Of being independent.

50

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip,
 To haud the wretch in order ;
 But where ye feel your honour grip,
 Let that aye be your border ;
 Its slightest touches, instant pause—
 Debar a' side pretences ;
 And resolutely keep its laws,
 Uncaring consequences.


60

The great Creator to revere,
Must sure become the creature ;
But still the preaching cant forbear,
And ev'n the rigid feature :
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
Be complaisance extended ; 79
An Atheist-laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended !

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded ;
Or if she gie a random sting,
It may be little minded ;
But when on life we're tempest-driv'n,
A conscience but a canker—
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n,
Is sure a noble anchor ! 80

Adieu, dear, amiable Youth !
Your heart can ne'er be wanting !
May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
Erect your brow undaunting !
In ploughman phrase, ' God send you speed,'
Still daily to grow wiser ;
And may ye better reckon the rede,
Than ever did th' Adviser !

ON A SCOTCH BARD, GONE TO THE
WEST INDIES.*

 YE wha live by sowps o' drink,
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,
A' ye wha live an' never think,
Come mourn wi' me !
Our billie's gien us a' a jink,¹
An' owre the sea.

Lament him a' ye rantin core,
Wha dearly like a random-splore,
Nae mair he'll join the merry roar.

In social key ; 10
For now he's ta'en anither shore,²
• • • An' owre the sea !

The bonie lasses weel may wiss him,
And in their dear petitions place him :³
The widows, wives, an' a' may bless him
Wi' tearfu' e'e ;

VAR. ¹ Our billie, Rob, has taen a jink.

² He's canter't to anither shore.

³ An' pray kind Fortune to redress him.

* Mr. Allan Cunningham has taken some pains to disprove the statement in a copy of Burns' Poems in his possession, that the person alluded to was John Geron, and not the Poet himself. The identity of the Bard with the hero of these verses, is however placed almost beyond a doubt by a MS. copy, in Burns' own writing, wherein the last line of the first stanza stands,

“ Our billie *Rob* has ta'en a jink.”

The Poem must therefore have been written in 1786 ; and it occurs in the first edition of Burns' works published in that year. The variations are from the MS. alluded to.

For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him
That's owre the sea !

O Fortune, they hae room to grumble!
Hadst thou taen aff some drowsy bummle, 20
Wha can do nought but fyke an' fumble,
 'Twad been nae plea;
But he was gleg as ony wumble,
That's owro the sea !

Auld, cantie Kyle* may weepers wear,
An' stain them wi' the saut, saut tear,
'Twill mak⁴ her poor, auld heart, I fear,
 In flinders fleo;
He was her Laureat monie a year
That's owre the sea ! 30

He saw misfortune's cauld nor-west
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A jillet brak his heart at last,
 Ill may she be !
So, took a birth afore the mast,
An' owre the sea.

To tremble under Fortune's cummock,
On⁵ scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
Wi' his proud, independent stomach,
 Could ill agree; 40
So, row't his hurdies in a hammock,
An' owro the sea.

VAR. ⁴ gar.

⁵ An'.


* Kilmarnock.

He ne'er was gi'en to great misguidin',
 Yet cooin his pouches wad na bide in ;
 Wi' him it ne'er was under hidin',
 He dealt it free :
 The Muse was a' that he took pride in,
 That's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
 An' hap him in a cozie biel ;
 Ye'll find him ay' a dainty chiel,
 And fu' o' glee ;
 He wad na wrang the vera deil,
 That's owre the sea.

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie !⁶
 Your native soil was right ill-willie ;
 But may ye flourish like a lily,
 Now bonilie !
 I'll toast ye in my hindmost gillie,
 Tho' owre the sea !

TO A HAGGIS.*

AIR fa' your honest, sonsie face,
 Great chieftain o' the puddin'-race !
 Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
 Painch, tripe, or thairm :
 Weel are ye wordy o' a grace
 As lang's my arm.

VAR. ⁶ Then fare-you-weel, my rhymin billie !

* These verses are not in the first edition

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill,
Your pin wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need, 10
While thro' your pores the dews distil
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic labour dight,
An' cut you up wi' ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright
Like onie ditch ;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reckin, rich !

Then, horn for horn they stretch an' strive,
Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive, 20
Till a' their weel-swallow'd kytes belyve
Are bent like drums ;
Then auld guidman, maist like to rive,
Bethankit hums.

Is there that o'er his French ragout,
Or olio that wad staw a sow,
Or fricassee wad mak her spew
Wi' perfect sconner,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
On sic a dinner ! 30

Poor devil ! see him owre his trash
As feckless as a wither'd rash,
His spindle shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve a nit ;
Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
O how unfit !

But mark the rustic, haggis-fed,
 The trembling earth resounds his tread,
 Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
 He'll mak it whistle ; 40
 An' legs, an' arms, an' heads will sned,
 Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye Pow'rs, wha mak mankind your care,
 And dish them out their bill o' fare,
 Auld Scotland wants nae stinking ware
 That jaups in luggies ;
 But, if ye wish her gratefu' prayer,
 Gie her a Haggis.

A

DEDICATION TO GAVIN HAMILTON,* ESQ.

EXPECT na, Sir, in this narration,
 A fleecchin, fleth'rin Dedication,
 'To roose you up, an' ca' you guid,
 An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid,
 Because ye're surnam'd like his Grace,
 Perhaps related to the race ;
 Then when I'm tir'd—and sac are ye,

* This gentleman, the steady friend of the Poet, was a descendant of the Hamiltons of Kype, in Lanarkshire, and though "surnam'd like his Grace," and "perhaps related to his race," the connection with the Ducal house has not been discovered. Several letters from Burns to him occur in his correspondence. In August, 1787, he wrote to Mr. Hamilton, describing his brother and his family at Harvieston, in Ayrshire. It was on that occasion that the Poet first saw Mr. Hamilton's two daughters, Grace and Charlotte, and the

Wi' mony a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
Set up a face, how I stop short,
For fear your modesty be hurt. 10

This may do—maun do, Sir, wi' them wha
Maun please the great folk for a wamefou ;
For me! sae laigh I needna bow,
For, Lord be thankit, I can plough ;
And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg ;
Sae I shall say, an' that's nae flatt'rin,
It's just sic Poet, an' sic Patron.

The Poet, some guid angel help him,
Or else, I fear, some ill ane skelp him ! 20
He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
But only—he's no just begun yet.

The Patron (Sir, ye maun forgie me,
I winna lie, come what will o' me),
On ev'ry hand it will allow'd be,
He's just—nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant,
He downa see a poor man want ;

latter was the "Maid of Devon," of whom he speaks in terms of admiration, and to whom he afterwards addressed "The Banks of the Devon."

Speaking in the letter just alluded to of Mr. Gavin Hamilton's son, "the wee curlie John," of the Dedication, Burns says, "the Hamiltons of Harvieston were highly delighted when I told them that John was so good a boy, and so fine a scholar." Other verses to Mr. Hamilton, and his Epitaph, will be found in the second volume.

What's no his ain he winna tak it,
 What ance he says he winna break it; 30
 Ought he can lend he'll no refus't,
 Till aft his guidness is abus'd;
 And rascals whyles that do him wrang,
 Ev'n that, he does na mind it lang:
 As master, landlord, husband, father,
 He does na fail his part in either.

But then, nae thanks to him for a' that;
 Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that;
 It's naething but a milder feature
 Of our poor, sinfu', corrupt nature: 40
 Yo'll get the best o' moral works,
 'Mang black Gentoos and pagan Turks,
 Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,
 Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
 That he's the poor man's friend in need,
 The gentleman in word and deed,
 It's no thro' terror of damnation;
 It's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
 Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain! 50
 Vain is his hope, whose stay and trust is
 In moral mercy, truth, and justice!

No—stretch a point to catch a plack;
 Abuse a brother to his back;
 Steal thro' a winnock frae a whore,
 But point the rake that taks the door:
 Be to the poor like onie whunstane,
 And haud their noses to the grunstane;

Ply ev'ry art o' legal thieving ;
Nae matter,—stick to sound believing. 60

Learn three-mile pray'rs, and half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves, an' lang, wry faces ;
Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own ;
I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

O ye wha leave the springs of Calvin,
For gumlie dubs of your ain delvin !
Ye sons of heresy and error,
Ye'll some day squeel in quaking terror ! 70
When vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath ;
When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
Just frets till Heav'n commission gies him :
While o'er the harp pale mis'ry moans,
And strikes the ever-deep'ning tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans !

Your pardon, Sir, for this digression,
I maist forgat my Dedication ;
But when divinity comes cross me, 80
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, Sir, ye see 'twas nae daft vapour,
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, Sir, to You :
Because (ye need na tak it ill)
I thought them something like yoursel.


Then patronize them wi' your favour,
 And your petitioner shall ever—
 I had amaist said, ever pray : 90
 But that's a word I need na say :
 For prayin I hae little skill o't ;
 I'm baith dead-sweer, an' wretched ill o't ;
 But I'se repeat each poor man's pray'r,
 That kens or hears about you, Sir :—

‘ May ne’er misfortune’s gowling bark
 ‘ Howl thro’ the dwelling o’ the Clerk !
 ‘ May ne’er his gen’rous, honest heart,
 ‘ For that same gen’rous spirit smart !
 ‘ May Kennedy’s far honoured name 100
 ‘ Lang beet his hymeneal flame,
 ‘ Till Hamiltons, at least a dizen,
 ‘ Are frae thair nuptial labours risen :
 ‘ Five bonie lasses round their table,
 ‘ And seven braw fellows, stout an’ able,
 ‘ To serve their King and Country weel,
 ‘ By word, or pen, or pointed steel !
 ‘ May health and peace, with mutual rays,
 ‘ Shine on the evening o’ his days ;
 ‘ Till his wee, curlie John’s ier-oc, 110
 ‘ When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
 ‘ The last, sad, mournful rites bestow !’

I will not wind a lang conclusion,
 Wi’ complimentary effusion :
 But whilst your wishes and endeavours
 Are blest with Fortune’s smiles and favours,
 I am, dear Sir, with zeal most fervent,
 Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which Pow'rs above prevent)
 That iron-hearted earl, Want, 120
 Attended in his grim advances,
 By sad mistakes, and black mischances,
 While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
 Make you as poor a dog as I am,
 Your humble servant then no more ;
 For who would humbly serve the poor ?
 But, by a poor man's hopes in Heav'n !
 While recollection's pow'r is given,
 If, in the vale of humble life,
 The victim sad of fortune's strife, 130
 I, thro' the tender gushing tear,
 Should recognize my Master dear,
 If friendless, low, we meet together,
 Then, Sir, your hand—my Friend and Brother !

TO A LOUSE, ON SEEING ONE ON A
LADY'S BONNET, AT CHURCH.


 A! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie !
 Your impudence protects you sairly :
 I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
 Owre gauze and lace ;
 Tho' faith, I fear ye dine but sparely
 On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin, blastit wonner,
 Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
 How dare ye set your fit upon her,
 Sac fine a lady !

Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

Swith, in some beggar's haffet squattle ;
Thero ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle
Wi' ither kindred, jumping eattle,
In shoals and nations ;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er dare unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud ye there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rels, snug an' tight ;
Na, faith ye yet ! ye'll no be right
Till ye've got on it,
The vera tapmost, tow'ring height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth ! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump and gray as onie grozet ;
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty doze o't,
Wad dress your droddum ! :o

I wad na been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's flannen toy ;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wyliccoat ;
But Miss's fine Lunardi ! fie,
How daur ye do't ?

O, Jenny, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abroad !

Ye little ken what cursed speed
 The blastie's makin !
 Thae winks and finger-ends, I dread,
 Are notice takin !

40

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
 To see oursels as others see us !
 It wad frae monie a blunder free us
 And foolish notion :
 What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
 And ev'n Devotion !

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.*

EDINA ! Scotia's darling seat !
 All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
 Where once beneath a monarch's feet,
 Sat legislation's sov'reign pow'rs !
 From marking wildlly-scatt'ed flow'rs,
 As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
 And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
 I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

* This Address, which does not occur in the first edition, appears to have been written in Edinburgh in 1786. The "Fair" was, Burns says in a letter to Mr. Chalmers, in December, 1786, "the heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter to Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once. There has not been any thing nearly like her, in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness, the great Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence." She will be again mentioned in the note to the Elegy on her death.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy trade his labours plies ; 10
There architecture's noble pride
Bids elegance and splendour rise ;
Here justice, from her native skies,
High wields her balance and her rod ;
There learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks science in her coy abode.

Thy Sons, Edina, social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail ;
Their views enlarg'd, their lib'ral mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale ; 20
Attentive still to sorrow's wail,
Or modest merit's silent claim :
And never may their sources fail !
And never envy blot their name !

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn,
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptur'd thrill of joy !
Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
Heav'n's beauties on my fancy shine ; 30
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own his work indeed divine !

There watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar ;
Like some bold vet'ran, gray in arms,
And mark'd with many a seamy scar :
The pond'rous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock ;

Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repell'd th' invader's shock. 40

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome,
Where Scotia's kings of other years,
Fam'd heroes, had their royal home :
Alas, how chang'd the times to come !
Their royal name low in the dust !
Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam !
Tho' rigid law cries out, 'twas just !

Wild beats my heart, to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors, in days of yore, 50
Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
Old Scotia's bloody lion bore :
Ev'n I who sing in rustic lore, '
Haply my sires have left their shed,
And fac'd grim danger's loudest roar,
Bold-following where your fathers led !

Edina ! Scotia's darling seat !
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat legislation's sov'reign pow'rs ! 60
From marking wildy-scatter'd flow'rs,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

EPISTLE TO JOHN LAPRAIK, AN OLD
SCOTTISH BARD.*

April 1st, 1785.

WHILE briers an' woodbines budding
green,
An' paitricks serraichin loud at e'en,
An' morning poussie whiddin seen,
Inspire my Muse,
This freedom in an unknown frien'
I pray excuse.

On fasten-een we had a rockin,
To ca' the crack and weave our stockin;
And there was muckle fun and jokin,
Ye need na doubt; 10
At length we had a hearty yokin
At sang about.

* Gilbert Burns says, "The 'Epistle to John Lapraik' was produced exactly on the occasion described by the author. He says in that poem, "On fasten-een we had a rockin.' I believe he has omitted the word *rocking* in the glossary. It is a term derived from those primitive times, when the country-women employed their spare hours in spinning on the rock, or distaff. This simple implement is a very portable one, and well-fitted to the social inclination of meeting in a neighbour's house; hence the phrase of *going a-rocking*, or *with the rock*. As the connexion the phrase had with the implement was forgotten when the rock gave place to the spinning-wheel, the phrase came to be used by both sexes on social occasions, and men talk of going with their rocks as well as women. It was at one of these *rockings* at our house, when we had twelve or fifteen young people with their *rocks*, that Lapraik's song, beginning, 'When I upon thy bosom lean,' was sung, and we

That, set him to a pint of ale,
An' either douce or merry tale,
Or rhymes an' sangs he'd made himsel,
Or witty catches,
"Tween Inverness and Tiviotdale,
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, an' swoor an aith,
Tho' I should pawn my pleugh and graith,
Or die a cadger pownie's death,
 At some dyke-back, 19
A pint an' gill I'd gie them baith
To hear your crack.

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the cambo-jingle fell,
Tho' rude an' rough.
Yet crooning to a body's sel,
Does weel enough.

I am nae Poet, in a sense,
But just a Rhymer, like, by chance,
An' hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet, what the matter ?
Whene'er my Muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, ‘ How can you e’er propose,
‘ You wha ken hardly verso frac prose,
 ‘ To mak a sang ? ’
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
 Ye’re maybe wrang.

(6)

Awa, ye selfish warly race,
 Wha think that havins, sense, an' grace,
 Ev'n love an' friendship, should give place
 To catch-the-plack !
 I dinna like to see your face,
 Nor hear your crack. 120

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
 Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
 Who hold your being on the terms,
 ' Each aid the others,'
 Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
 My friends, my brothers !

But to conclude my lang epistle,
 As my auld pen's worn to the grissle ;
 Twa lines frae you wad gar me ffsle,
 Who am, most fervent, 130
 While I can either sing, or whistle,
 Your friend and servant.

VAR. cont.

I've seen me dacz't upon a time,
 I scarce could wink or see a styme ;
 Just as half muchkin does me prime,
 Aught less is little,
 Then back I rattle on the rhyme
 As gleg's a whittle !

TO THE SAME.

Lapraik having replied to Burns' Epistle in some verses, which will be found in the Appendix, the Poet sent him the following:

April 21st, 1785.

WHILE new-ca'd kye rowte at the stake,
 An' pownies reek in pleugh or braik,
 This hour on c'enin's edge I take,
 To own I'm debtor,
 To honest-hearted, auld Lapraik,
 For his kind letter.

Forjesket sair, with weary legs,
 Rattlin the corn out-owre the rigs,
 Or dealing thro' amang the naigs
 Their ten-hours' bite, 10
 My awkart Muse sair pleads and begs,
 I would na write.

The tapetless, ramfeezl'd hizzie,
 She's saft at best, and something lazy,
 Quo' she, 'Ye ken, we've been sae busy,
 'This month an' mair,
 That trouth my head is grown right dizzie,
 'An' something sair.'

Her dowff excuses pat me mad;
 'Conscience,' says I, 'ye thowless jad! 20

She's gien me monie a jirt an' flog,
Sin' I could striddle owre a rig ;
But, by the Lord, tho' I should beg
Wi' lyart pow,
I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg.
As lang's I dow !

Now comes the sax an' twentieth simmer,
I've seen the bud upo' the timmer,
Still persecuted by the limmer
Frae year to year ;
But yet, despite the kittle kimmer,
I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city Gent,
Behint a kist to lie an' sklent,
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent per cent;
An' muckle wame,
In some bit Brugh to represent
A Bailie's name?

Or is't the paughty, feudal Thane.
Wi' ruff'd sark an' glancing cane,
Wha thinks himsel nae sheep-shank bane.
But lordly stalks,
While caps and bonnets aff are taen,
As by he walks ?

' O Thou wha gies us each guid gift !
' Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,
' Thén turn me, if Thou please, adrift,
 ' Thro' Scotland wide ;
' Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,
 ' In a' their pride !'

TO WILLIAM SIMPSON,*

OCHILTREE.

May, 1785.



GAT your letter, winsome Willie;
 Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
 Tho' I maun say't, I wad be silly,
 An' unco vain,
 Should I believe, my coaxin billie,
 Your flatterin strain.

But I'se believe ye kindly meant it,
 I sud be laith to think ye hinted
 Ironie satir, sidelin sklentet
 On my poor Music; 10
 Tho' in sic phraisin terms ye've penn'd it,
 I scaree excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,
 Should I but dare a hope to speel,
 Wi' Allan, or wi' Gilbertfield,
 The braes o' fame;
 Or Ferguson, the writer-chiel,
 A deathless name.

(O Ferguson! thy glorious parts
 Ill suited law's dry, musty arts! 20

* "Mr. Simpson was then, and is still," says Allan Cunningham, "schoolmaster of the parish of Ochiltree, and lives respected by his scholars, some of whom are to be found in the East as well as in the West."

My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
 Ye Enbrugh Gentry !
 The tythe o' what ye waste at cartes
 Wad stow'd his pantry !)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
 Or lasses gie my heart a screed,
 As whiles they're like to be my dead,
 (O sad disease !)

I kittle up my rustic reed ;
 It gies me case. 30

Auld Coila, now, may fidge fu' fain,
 She's gotten Poets o' her ain,
 Chiels wha their chanters winna hain,
 But tune their lays,
 Till echoes a' resound again
 Her weel-sung praise.

Nae Poet thought her worth his while,
 To set her name in measur'd style ;
 She lay like some unkend-of isle,
 Beside New Holland, 40
 Or whare wild-meeting oceans boil
 Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay an' famous Ferguson
 Gied Forth an' Tay a lift aboon ;
 Yarrow an' Tweed, to monie a tune,
 Owre Scotland rings,
 While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, an' Doon,
 Naebody sings.

Th' Ilissus, Tiber, Thames, an' Seine,
 Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line ! 50

But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
 An' cock your crest,
 We'll gar our streams an' burnies shine
 Up wi' the best.

We'll sing auld Coila's plains an' fells,
 Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
 Her banks an' braes, her dens an' dells,
 Where glorious Wallace
 Aft bure the gree, as story tells,
 Frae suthron billies. 60

At Wallace' name, what Scottish blood
 But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
 Oft have our fearless fathers strode
 By Wallace' side,
 Still pressing onward, red-wat-shod,
 Or glorious dy'd.

O, sweet are Coila's haughs an' woods,
 When lintwhites chant amang the buds,
 And jinkin hares, in amorous whids,
 'Their loves enjoy, 70
 While thro' the braes the cushat croods
 Wi' wailfu' cry!

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me
 When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
 Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
 Are hoary gray;
 Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
 Dark'ning the day!

O Nature! a' thy shews an' forms
 To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms! 80

Whether the summer kindly warms,
 Wi' life an' light,
 Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
 The lang, dark night !

The Muse, nae Poet ever fand her,
 Till by himsel he learn'd to wander,
 Adown some trottin burn's meander,
 An' no think lang ;
 O sweet, to stray an' pensive ponder
 A heart-felt sang !

60


The warly race may drudge an' drive,
 Hog-shouter, jundie, stretch, an' strive,
 Let me fair Nature's face describe,
 And I, w' pleasure,
 Shall let the busy, grumblin' hive
 Bum owre their treasure.

Fareweel, ' my rhyme-composing brither ! '
 We've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither :
 Now let us lay our heads thegither,
 In love fraternal :
 May Envy wallop in a tether,
 Black fiend, infernal !

100

While highlandmen hate tolls an' taxes ;
 While moorlan' herds like guid, fat braxies ;
 While terra firma, on her axis,
 Diurnal turns,
 Count on a friend, in faith an' practice,
 In Robert Burns.

POSTSCRIPT.

Y memory's no worth a preen ;
 I had amaist forgotten clean,
 Ye bade me write you what they mean
 By this New-Light,*
 'Bout which our herds sae aft hae been
 Maist like to fight.

In days when mankind were but callans
 At grammar, logic, an' sic talents,
 They took nae pains their speech to balance,
 Or rules to gie, 10
 But spak their thoughts in plain, braid Lallans,
 Like you or me.

In thae auld times, they thought the moon,
 Just like a sark, or pair o' shoon,
 Wore by degrees, till her last roon,
 Gaed past their viewin,
 An' shortly after she was done,
 They gat a new one.

This past for certain, undisputed ;
 It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it, 20
 Till chieles gat up an' wad confute it,
 An' ca'd it wrang ;
 An' muckle din there was about it,
 Baith loud an' lang.

* See note, p. 56.

Some herds, weel learn'd upo' the beuk,
Wad threap auld folk the thing misteuk;
For 'twas the auld moon turn'd a neuk,

An' out o' sight,
An' backlins-comin, to the leuk,
She grew mair bright.

30

This was deny'd, it was affirm'd;
The herds an' hissels were alarm'd;
The rev'rend gray-beards rav'd an' storm'd,
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were inform'd
Than their auld daddies.

Frae less to mair it gaed to sticks;
Frae words an' aiths to clours an' nicks;
An' monie a fallow gat his licks,

Wi' hearty crunt;
An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd an' brunt.

40

This game was play'd in monie lands,
An' auld-light caddies bure sic hands,
That, faith, the youngsters took the sands

Wi' nimble shanks,
The lairds forbad, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

But new-light herds gat sic a cove,
Folk thought them ruined stick-an-stowe,
Till now amaist on ev'ry knowe

Ye'll find ane plac'd;
An' some, their new-light fair avow,
Just quite barefac'd.

50

Nae doubt the auld-light flocks are bleatin ;
 Their zealous herds are vex'd an' sweatin ;
 Mysel, I've even seen them greetin
 Wi' girmen spite,
 To hear the moon sae sadly lie'd on
 By word an' write.

But shortly they will cove the louns !
Some auld light herds in neebor towns
Are mind't, in things they ca' balloons,
 To tak a flight,
An' stay a month amang the moons,
 An' see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them ;
An' when the auld moon's gaun to lea'e them,
The hindmost shaird, they'll fetch it wi' them,
Just i' their pouch, 70
An' when the new-light billies see them,
I think they'll crouch !

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter
Is naething but a ' moonshine matter ;'
But tho' dull prose-folk Latin splatter
In logic tulzie,
I hope, we Bardies ken some better
Than mind sic brulzie.

EPISTLE TO JOHN RANKINE,* ENCLOSING SOME POEMS.



ROUGH, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wale o' cocks for fun an' drinkin !
There's monie godly folks are thinkin,
Your dreams† an' tricks
Will send you, Korah-like, a-sinkin,
Straught to auld Nick's.

Ye hae sae monie cracks an' cants,
And in your wicked, drunken rants,

* John Rankine lived at Adam Hill, in Ayrshire, and was a man of much humour and ready wit. Allan Cunningham considers Burns' account of the partridge, and of his being fined for poaching, a figurative allusion to the connexion which produced the "illegitimate child" of his celebrated "Address;" but it is by no means certain that the conjecture is well founded.

† A certain humorous dream of his was then making noise in the country-side. R. B. This dream is thus related by Allan Cunningham. "Lord K. was in the habit of calling his familiar acquaintances 'brutes,' or 'damned brutes.' One day, meeting Rankine, his lordship said, 'Brute, are ye dumb? have ye no queer sly story to tell us?' 'I have nae story,' said Rankine, 'but last night I had an odd dream.' 'Out with it by all means,' said the other. 'A weel, ye see,' said Rankine, 'I dreamed that I was dead, and that for keeping other than good company on earth, I was damned. When I knocked at Hell-door wha should open it but the Deil; he was in a rough humour, and said, 'Wha may you be and what's your name?' 'My name,' quoth I, 'is John Rankine, and my dwelling-place was Adam-Hill.' 'Gae wa' wi,' quoth Satan, 'ye canna be here; ye're ane of Lord K—'s damned brutes—Hell's fou o' them already!' This sharp rebuke, it is said, polished, for the future, his lordship's speech."

Ye mak a devil o' the saunts,
 An' fill them fou ; 10
 And then their failings, flaws, an' wants,
 Are a' seen thro'.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it !
 That holy robe, O dinna tear it !
 Spare't for their sakes wha aften wear it,
 The lads in black ;
 But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
 Rives't aff their back.

Think, wicked sinner, wha ye're skaithing,
 It's just the blue-gown badge an' claithing 20
 O' saunts ; tak that, ye lea'e them naithing
 To ken them by,

Frae ony unregenerate heathen
 Like you or I.

I've sent you here some rhyming ware,
 A' that I bargain'd for, an' mair ;
 Sae, when ye hae an hour to spare,
 I will expect,
 Yon sang,* ye'll sen't, wi' cannie care,
 And no neglect. 30

Tho', faith, sma' heart hae I to sing !
 My Muse dow scarcely spread her wing !
 I've play'd mysel a bonie spring,
 An' danc'd my fill !
 I'd better gaen an' sair't the king
 At Bunker's Hill.

'Twas ae night lately, in my fun,
 I gaed a roving wi' the gun,

* A song he had promised the Author. R. B.

An' brought a pair-trick to the grun,
 A bonie hen, 40
 And, as the twilight was begun,
 Though nane wad ken.

The poor, wee thing was little hurt;
 I strait it a weo for sport,
 Ne'er thinkin they wad fash me for't;
 But, Deil-ma-care!
 Somebody tells the poacher-court
 The hale affair.

Some auld, us'd hands had ta'en a note,
 That sic a hen had got a shot; 50
 I was suspected for the plot;
 I scorn'd to lie;
 So gat the whistle o' my groat,
 An' pay't the fee.

But, by my gun, o' guns the wale,
 An' by my pouter an' my hail,
 An' by my hen, an' by her tail,
 I vow an' swear!
 The game shall pay, o'er moor an' dale,
 For this, niest year. 60

As soon's the clockin-time is by,
 An' the wee pouts begun to cry,
 Lord, I'se hae sportin by an' by,
 For my gowd guinea;
 Tho' I should herd the buckskin kye
 For't, in Virginia.

Trowth, they had muckle for to blame!
 'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,
 But twa-three draps about the wame

It pits me aye as mad's a hare ;
So I can rhyme nor write nae mair ;
But pennyworths again is fair,
 When time's expedient ;
Meanwhile I am, respected Sir,
 Your most obedient.

WRITTEN IN FRIARS-CARSE HERMITAGE,
ON NITH-SIDE.*

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deck'd in silken stole,
Grave these counsels¹ on thy soul.
Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost :²

² Day how rapid in its flight!

Day how few must see the night.

Hope not, &c. "Gents. Mag." 2nd copy.

* To Mrs. Dunlop the Poet wrote, on the 2nd of August, 1788, "I shall transcribe you a few lines I wrote in a Hermitage belonging to a gentleman in my Nithsdale neighbourhood. They are almost the only favours the Muses have conferred upon me in that country." From the date to a copy, in the Poet's own hand, they would appear to have been written in June in that year. The Hermitage belonged to Captain Riddle, of Friar's Carse, near Ellisland, and the first six lines were written on a pane of glass in the window. The Poet's own account of them to Miss Chalmers, in September, 1788, is this:—"One day, in an Hermitage, on the Banks of Nith, belonging to a gentleman in my neigh-

Hope not sunshine ev'ry hour,
 Fear not clouds will always lour.

As Youth and Love, with sprightly dance,
 Beneath thy morning star³ advance, 10
 Pleasure with her syren air
 May delude the thoughtless pair ;
 Let Prudence bless Enjoyment's cup.
 Then raptur'd sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
 Life's meridian flaming nigh,
 Dost thou spurn the humble vale ?
 Life's proud summits wouldst thou scale ?
 Check thy climbing step, elate,
 Evils lurk in felon wait : 20
 Dangers, eagle-pinioned, bold,
 Soar around each cliffy hold,
 While cheerful Peace, with linn⁴et song,
 Chants the lowly dells among.

As the⁴ shades of ev'ning close,
 Beck'ning thee to long repose ;

VAR. ³ sun. "Gents. Mag." 2nd copy.

⁴ When thy. *Ibid.*

bourhood, who is so good as to give me a key at pleasure, I wrote as follows, supposing myself the sequestered venerable inhabitant of the lonely mansion."

Upon none of his productions did Burns bestow so much labour, or make so many alterations, as in these, his favourite verses, for there are in fact two distinct versions of them. Both the following copies have been collated with MSS. in his own hand-writing, and with two other copies, communicated to the "Gentleman's Magazine," in August, 1832, which the Poet had given to his friend, Mr. Cruikshank. The variations between these copies, and the copies printed by Allan Cunningham, of which the first belonged to Dr. Geddes, are also pointed out. Burns inserted these verses in the edition of his works which he prepared in 1793 or 1794

As life itself becomes disease,
 Seek the chimney-nook of ease.
 There ruminate with sober thought,
 On all thou'st seen, and heard, and wrought ; 30
 And teach the sportive youngers round,
 Saws of experience, sage and sound.
 Say, man's true, genuine estimate,⁵
 The grand criterion of his fate,
 Is not, art thou high or low ?
 Did thy fortune ebb or flow ?⁶
 Did many talents gild thy span ?
 Or frugal Nature grudge thee one ?
 Tell them, and press it on their mind,
 As thou thyself must shortly find, 40
 The smile or frown of awful Heav'n
 To Virtue or to Vice is giv'n.
 Say, to be just, and kind, and wise,
 There solid self-enjoyment lies ;
 That foolish, selfish, faithless ways,
 Lead to be wretched, vile, and base.
 Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
 To the bed of lasting sleep ;
 Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
 Night, where dawn shall never break, 50
 Till future life, future no more,
 To light and joy the good restore,

VAR. ⁵ ————— genuine estimate,
 Say the criterion of their fate,
 The important query of their state,
 Is not, &c. *Gent. Mag.* 2nd copy.
⁶ ————— ebb or flow ?
 Wert thou cottager or king,
 Peer or peasant ? no such thing.
 Tell them, &c. *Ibid.*

To light and joy unknown before.
 'Stranger, go ! Heav'n be thy guide !
 Quod the Bedesman of Nith-side.

GLENRIDDEL HERMITAGE, JUNE 28th, 1788.

FROM THE MS.

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
 Be thou clad in russet weed,
 Be thou deckt in silken stole,
 Grave these maxims on thy soul.
 Life is but a day at most,
 Sprung from night, in darkness lost ;
 Hope not sunshine every hour,
 Fear not clouds will always lour.
 Happiness is but a name,
 Make content and ease thy aim. 10
 Ambition is a meteor gleam,
 Fame, an idle restless¹ dream :
 Peace,² the tenderest flower of spring ;
 Pleasures, insects on the wing ;
 Those that sip the dew alone,
 Make the butterflies thy³ own ;
 Those that would the bloom devour,
 Crush the locusts, save the flower.
 For the future be prepar'd,
 Guard, wherever thou canst guard ; 20
 But thy utmost duly⁴ done,

VAR. ¹ a restless airy. *Gent. Mag.* 1st copy.

² Pleasures, insects on the wing ;

Round peace, the tenderest flower of spring. *Ibid.*


³ their. *Ibid.*

⁴ duty *Ibid.*

Welcome what thou canst not shun.
 Follies past give thou to air,
 Make their consequence thy care :
 Keep the name of Man in mind,
 And dishonor not thy kind.
 Reverence, with lowly heart,
 HIM whose wondrous work thou art :
 Keep His goodness still in view,
 Thy Trust, and thy Example too.
 Stranger, go ! Heaven be thy guide !
 Quod the Bedesman of⁵ Nihe-side.

30

ODE,* SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
 • MRS. OSWALD.


 WELLER in yon dungeon dark,
 Hangman of creation, mark !
 Who in widow-weeds appears,
 Laden with unhonoured years,
 Noosing with care a bursting purse,
 Baited with many a deadly curse !

VAR. ⁵ on. *Gent. Mag.* 1st copy.

* To Dr. Moore the Poet gave the following account of this Ode :

“ *Ellisland*, March 23, 1788.

“ The enclosed Ode is a compliment to the memory of the late Mrs. [Oswald], of ——. You probably knew her personally, an honour which I cannot boast ; but I spent my early years in her neighbourhood, and among her servants and tenants. I know that she was detested with the most heartfelt cordiality. However, in the particular part of her conduct which roused my poetic wrath, she was much less

STROPHE.

View the wither'd beldam's face—
 Can thy keen inspection trace
 Aught of humanity's sweet melting grace?
 Note that eye, 'tis rheum o'erflows, 10
 Pity's flood there never rose.
 See those hands, ne'er stretch'd to save,
 Hands that took—but never gave.
 Keeper of Mammon's iron chest,
 Lo, there she goes, unpitied and unblest
 She goes, but not to realms of everlasting rest!

ANTISTROPHE.

Plunderer of armies, lift thine eyes,
 (A while forbear, ye tort'ring fiends)
 Seest thou whose step unwilling hither bends?
 No fallen angel, hurl'd from upper skies; 20
 'Tis thy trusty quondam mate,

blameable. In January last, on my road to Ayrshire, I had put up at Bailie Wigham's, in Sanquhar, the only tolerable inn in the place. The frost was keen, and the grim evening and howling wind were ushering in a night of snow and drift. My horse and I were both much fatigued with the labours of the day, and just as my friend the Bailie and I were bidding defiance to the storm, over a smoking bowl, in wheels the funeral pageantry of the late great Mrs. Oswald, and poor I am forced to brave all the horrors of the tempestuous night, and jade my horse, my young favourite horse, whom I had just christened Pegasus, twelve miles farther on, through the wildest muirs and hills of Ayrshire, to New Cumnock, the next inn. The powers of poesy and prose sink under me, when I would describe what I felt. Suffice it to say, that when a good fire, at New Cumnock, had so far recovered my frozen sinews, I sat down and wrote the enclosed ode."

Doom'd to share thy fiery fâte,
She, tardy, hell-ward plies.

EPODE.

And are they of no more avail,
Ten thousand glitt'ring pounds a year ?
In other worlds can Mammon fail,
Omnipotent as he is here ?
O, bitter mock'ry of the pompous bier,
While down the wretched vital part is driv'n !
The cave-lodg'd beggar, with a conscience clear, 30
Expires in rags, unknown, and goes to Heav'n.

ELEGY

ON CAPT. MATTHEW HENDERSON,*

A GENTLEMAN WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS HONOURS

IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD.

But now his radiant course is run,
For Matthew's course was bright ;
His soul was like the glorious sun,
A matchless, Heav'nly Light.



DEATH ! thou tyrant fell and bloody !
The meikle devil wi' a woodie
Haur! thee hame to his black smiddie,
O'er hurecheon hides,
And like stock-fish come o'er his studdie
Wi' thy auld sides !

* To Dr. Moore, Burns wrote in February, 1791, "The Elegy on Captain Henderson is a tribute to the memory of a man I loved much. Poets have in this the same advantage .

He's gane, he's gane ! he's frae us torn,
 The ae best fellow e'er was born !
 Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel' shall mourn
 By wood and wild, 10
 Where, haply, pity strays forlorn,
 Frac man exil'd.

Ye hills, near neebors o' the starns,
 That proudly cock your cresting cairns !
 Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing earns,
 Where echo slumbers !
 Come join, ye Nature's sturdiest bairns,
 My wailing numbers !

Mourn, ilka grove the cushat kens !
 Ye hazly shaws and briery dens ! 20
 Ye burnies, wimplin down your gies,
 Wi' toddlin din,
 Or foaming strang, wi' hasty stens,
 Frac lin to lin.

as Roman Catholics; they can be of service to their friends after they have passed that bourne where all other kindness ceases to be of any avail. Whether, after all, either the one or the other be of any real service to the dead, is, I fear, very problematical; but I am sure they are highly gratifying to the living: and as a very orthodox text, I forget where in Scripture, says, 'whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;' so say I, whatsoever is not detrimental to society, and is of positive enjoyment, is of God, the Giver of all good things, and ought to be received and enjoyed by His creatures with thankful delight. As almost all my righteous tenets originate from my heart, I am wonderfully pleased with the idea, that I can still keep up a tender intercourse with the dearly beloved friend, or still more dearly beloved mistress, who is 'gone to the world of spirits.' These verses were first printed in the edition of 1793.

Mourn, little harebells o'er the lee ;
Ye stately foxgloves fair to see ;
Ye woodbines hanging bonilie,
 In scented bow'rs ;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
 The first o' flow'rs.

At dawn, when ev'ry grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at his head,
At ev'n, when beans their fragrance shed,
I' th' rustling gale,
Ye maukins whiddin thro' the glade,
Come join my wail.

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood ;
Ye grouse that crap the heather bud ;
Ye curlews, calling thro' a clud ;
 Ye whistling plover ;
And mourn, ye whirring pairtrick brood ;
 He's gane for ever !

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals,
Ye fisher herons, watching eels ;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
 Circling the lake ;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
 Rair for his sake.

Mourn, clam'ring craiks at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flow'ring claver gay ;
And when ye wing your annual way
Frac our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warlds, wha lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

O Henderson ! the man ! the brother !
 And art thou gone, and gone for ever !
 And hast thou crost that unknown river,
 Life's dreary bound !
 Like thee, where shall I find another,
 The world around !

93

Go to your sculptur'd tombs, ye Great,
 In a' the tinsel trash o' state !
 But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
 Thou man of worth !
 And weep thee ae best fellow's fate
 E'er lay in earth.

THE EPITAPH.

Stop, passenger ! my story's brief,
 And truth I shall relate, man ;
 I tell nae common tale o' grief,
 For Matthew was a great man.

100

If thou uncommon merit hast,
 Yet spurn'd at fortune's door, man ;
 A look of pity hither cast,
 For Matthew was a poor man.

If thou a noble sodger art,
 That passest by this grave, man,
 There moulders here a gallant heart ;
 For Matthew was a brave man.

If thou on men, their works and ways,
Canst throw uncommon light, man ; 110
Here lies wha weel had won thy praise,
For Matthew was a bright man.

If thou at friendship's sacred ca'
Wad life itself resign, man ;
The sympathetic tear maun fa',
For Matthew was a kind man.

If thou art staunch without a stain,
Like the unchanging blue, man ;
This was a kinsman o' thy ain,
For Matthew was a true man. 120

If thou hast wit, and fun, and fire,
And ne'er gude wine did fear, man,
This was thy billie, dam, and sire,
For Matthew was a queer man.

If ony whiggish whingin sot,
To blame poor Matthew dare, man ;
May dool and sorrow be his lot,
For Matthew was a rare man. 121

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS,
ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.*

NOW Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
Out-owre the grassy lea :

Now Phœbus cheers the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies ;
But nought can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

Now laverocks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing ; 10
The merle, in his noontide bow'r,
Makes woodland echocs ring ;
The mavis mild wi' many a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest :

* It is said by Mr. Allan Cunningham, that the ' Lament ' was written at the request of Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable, who rewarded him with a valuable snuff-box, on the lid of which was Queen Mary's portrait. Burns acknowledged the gift in a letter to the donor, dated Ellisland, 11th January, 1791. Lady Winifred was the daughter and sole heiress of William Maxwell, commonly called Earl of Nithsdale, only son of William, fifth Earl of Nithsdale, who was attainted of high treason in 1716. She died in 1801.

In a letter to Mrs. Graham, of Fintry, the Poet says, " Whether it is that the story of our Mary, Queen of Scots, has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have, in the enclosed ballad, succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not ; but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my muse for a good while past ; on that account I enclose it particularly to you."

In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

27

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae ;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae :
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rove their sweets amang ;
But I the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strang.

20

I was the Queen o' bonie France,
Where happy I hae been,
Fu' lightly rase I in the morn,
As blythe lay down at e'en :
And I'm the sov'reign of Scotland, .
And mony a traitor there ;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never-ending care.

30

But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my fae,
Grim vengeance, yet, shall whet a sword
That thro' thy soul shall gae :
The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee ;
Nor th' balm that draps on wounds of woe
Frae woman's pitying ee.

40

My son ! my son ! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine ;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,

That ne'er wad blink on mine !
 God keep thee frae thy mother's faes,
 Or turn their hearts to thee :
 And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
 Remember him for me !

Oh ! soon, to me, may summer-suns
 Nae mair light up the morn ! 50
 Nae mair, to me, the autumn winds
 Wave o'er the yellow corn !
 And in the narrow house o' death
 Let winter round me rave ;
 And the next flow'rs that deck the spring,
 Bloom on my peaceful grave !

EPISTLE TO R. GRAHAM, ESQ.*

WHEN Nature her great master-piece
 design'd,
 And fram'd her last, best work, the
 human mind,
 Her eye intent on all the mazy plan,
 She form'd of various parts the various man.

* Robert Graham, of Fintry, Esq. was one of the Commissioners of Excise, and having met Burns at the Duke of Athole's, became interested about him, and showed him many kindnesses. In August, 1788, Burns sent Mrs. Dunlop sixteen lines of this Epistle, beginning with

"Pity the tuneful Muses' helpless train,"

saying, "Since I am in the way of transcribing, the following were the production of yesterday, as I jogged through

Then first she calls the useful many forth ;
 Plain plodding industry, and sober worth :
 Thence peasants, farmers, native sons of earth,
 And merchandise' whole genus take their birth :
 Each prudent cit a warm existence finds,

the wild hills of New Cumnock. I intend inserting them, or something like them, in an epistle I am going to write to the gentleman on whose friendship my Excise hopes depend, Mr. Graham of Fintry; one of the worthiest and most accomplished gentlemen, not only of this country, but, I will dare to say it, of this age. The following are just the first crude thoughts, 'unhousel'd, unanointed, unanell'd;' and added, "Here the Muse left me."

The verses were sent to Mr. Graham in a letter, of which only these extracts have been printed, none of which refer to the Poem:—

"SIR,

"When I had the honour of being introduced to you at Athole House, I did not think so soon of asking a favour of you. When Lear, in Shakespeare, asks old Kent why he wished to be in his service, he answers, 'Because you have that in your face which I could like to call master.' For some such reason, sir, do I now solicit your patronage. You know, I dare say, of an application I lately made to your Board to be admitted an officer of Excise. I have, according to form, been examined by a supervisor, and to-day I gave in his certificate, with a request for an order for instructions. In this affair, if I succeed, I am afraid I shall but too much need a patronizing friend. Propriety of conduct as a man, and fidelity and attention as an officer, I dare engage for; but for anything like business, except manual labour, I am totally unacquainted.

"I had intended to have closed my late appearance on the stage of life in the character of a country farmer; but after discharging some filial and fraternal claims, I find I could only fight for existence in that miserable manner which I have lived to see throw a venerable parent into the jaws of a jail; whence death, the poor man's last and often best friend, rescued him.

"I know, sir, that to need your goodness is to have a

And all mechanics' many-apron'd kinds. 10
 Some other rarer sorts are wanted yet,
 The lead and buoy are needful to the net :
 The caput mortuum of gross desires
 Makes a material for mere knights and squires ;
 The martial phosphorus is taught to flow,

claim on it; may I therefore beg your patronage to forward me in this affair, till I be appointed to a division where, by the help of rigid economy, I will try to support that independence so dear to my soul, but which has been too often so distant from my situation."

To Dr. Moore, Burns wrote in January, 1789:—"I enclose you an Essay of mine, in a walk of poesy to me entirely new: I mean the Epistle addressed to R. G., or Robert Graham, of Fintry, Esq., a gentleman of uncommon worth, to whom I lie under very great obligations. This story of the Poem, like most of my poems, is connected with my own story, and to give you the one, I must give you something of the other."

To Professor Stewart he said, a few weeks afterwards, "The enclosed sealed packet I sent to Edinburgh a few days after I had the happiness of meeting you in Ayrshire, but you were gone for the continent. I have added a few more of my productions, those for which I am indebted to the Nithsdale Muses. The piece inscribed to R. G. Esq., is a copy of verses I sent Mr. Graham, of Finty, accompanying a request for his assistance in a matter, to me, of very great moment. To that gentleman I am already doubly indebted, for deeds of kindness of serious import to my dearest interests, done in a manner grateful to the delicate feelings of sensibility. This Poem is a species of composition new to me; but I do not intend it shall be my last essay of the kind, as you will see by the 'Poet's Progress' These fragments, if my design succeeds, are but a small part of the intended whole. I propose it shall be the work of my utmost exertions ripened by years; of course I do not wish it much known."

On a subsequent occasion Burns wrote to Mrs. Graham, sending her the "Lament of Mary Queen of Scots," and expressing the warmest gratitude to her husband. The Poet addressed other pieces to this benevolent friend.

She kneads the lumpish philosophic dough,
Then marks th' unyielding mass with grave designs,
Law, physics, politics, and deep divines :
Last, she sublimes th' Aurora of the poles,
The flashing elements of female souls. 20

The order'd system fair before her stood,
Nature, well-pleas'd, pronounc'd it very good ;
But ere she gave creating labour o'er,
Half-jest, she try'd one curious labour more ;
Some spumy, fiery, ignis fatuus matter ;
Such as the slightest breath of air might scatter ;
With arch alacrity and conscious glee
(Nature may have her whim as well as we,
Her Hogarth-art perhaps she meant to show it)
She forms the thing, and christens it—a Poet. 30
Creature, tho' oft the prey of care and sorrow,
When blest to-day, unmindful of to-morrow.
A being form'd t' amuse his graver friends,
Admir'd and prais'd—and there the homage ends :
A mortal quite unfit for Fortune's strife,
Yet oft the sport of all the ills of life ;
Prone to enjoy each pleasure riches give,
Yet haply wanting wherewithal to live :
Longing to wipe each tear, to heal each groan,
Yet frequent all unheeded in his own. 40

But honest Nature is not quite a Turk,
She laugh'd at first, then felt for her poor work.
Pitying the propless climber of mankind,
She cast about a standard tree to find ;
And, to support his helpless woodbine state,
Attach'd him to the generous truly great,
A title, and the only one I claim,
To lay strong hold for help on bounteous Graham.

Pity the tuneful muscs' hapless train,*
 Weak, timid landsmen on life's stormy main ! 50
 Their hearts no selfish stern absorbent stuff,
 That never gives—tho' humbly takes enough ;
 The little fate allows, they share as soon,
 Unlike sage, proverb'd, wisdom's hard wrung boon.
 The world were blest did bliss on them depend,
 Ah, that " the friendly c'er should want a friend !"
 Let prudence number o'er each sturdy son,
 Who life and wisdom at one race begun,
 Who feel by reason, and who give by rule,
 (Instinct's a brute, and sentiment a fool !) 60
 Who make poor ' will do ' wait upon ' I should '—
 We own they're prudent, but who feels they're good ?
 Ye wise ones, hence ! ye hurt the social eye !
 God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy !
 But come ye, who the godlike pleasure know,

* The first crude thoughts " unhoussel'd, unanointed, unanell'd," were as follow:—

" Pity the tuneful Muse's helpless train—
 Weak, timid landsmen on life's stormy main :
 The world were bless'd did bliss on them depend ;
 Ah, that ' the friendly e'er should want a friend !'
 The little fate bestows, they share as soon ;
 Unlike sage proverb'd wisdom's hard-wrung boon.
 Let prudence number o'er each sturdy son
 Who life and wisdom at one race begun ;
 Who feel by reason and who give by rule :
 (Instinct's a brute, and sentiment a fool !)
 Who make poor *will do* wait upon *I should* ;
 We own they're prudent, but who feels they're good ?
 Ye wise ones, hence ! ye hurt the social eye ;
 God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy !
 But come——"

It is remarkable that Burns did not insert this address to Mr. Graham in the last two editions of his works.

Heaven's attribute distinguished—to bestow!
Whose arms of love would grasp the human race;
Come thou who giv'st with all a courtier's grace;
Friend of my life, true patron of my rhymes!
Prop of my dearest hopes for future times. 70
Why shrinks my soul half blushing, half afraid,
Backward, abash'd to ask thy friendly aid?
I know my need, I know thy giving hand,
I crave thy friendship at thy kind command;
But there are such who court the tuneful nine—
Heavens! should the branded character be mine!
Whose verse in manhood's pride sublimely flows,
Yet vilest reptiles in their begging prose.
Mark, how their lofty independent spirit
Soars on the spurning wing of injur'd merit. 80
Seek not the proofs in private life to find;
Pity the best of words should be but wind!
So, to heaven's gates the lark's shrill song ascends,
But grovelling on the earth the carol ends.
In all the clam'rous cry of starving want,
They dun benevolence with shameless front;
Oblige them, patronize their tinsel lays,
They persecute you all your future days!
Ere my poor soul such deep damnation stain,
My horny fist assume the plough again; 90
The piebald jacket let me patch once more:
On eighteen-pence a-week I've liv'd before.
Tho', thanks to Heaven, I dare even that last shift!
I trust, meantime, my boon is in thy gift;
That, plac'd by thee upon the wish'd-for height,
Where, man and nature fairer in her sight,
My muse may imp her wing for some sublimer flight.

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, OF FINTRA, ESQ.*

NATE crippled of an arm, and now a leg,†
About to beg a pass for leave to beg;
Dull, listless, teas'd, dejected, and de-
prest,

(Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest):
Will generous Graham list to his Poet's wail?
(It soothes poor Misery, hearkning to her tale),
And hear him curse the light he first survey'd,
And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade?

Thou, Nature, partial Nature, I arraign;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain. 10
The lion and the bull thy care have found,¹
One shakes the forests, and one spurns the ground:
Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell,
Th' envenom'd² wasp, victorious, guards his cell.—
Thy minions, kings defend, control, devour,
In all th' omnipotence of rule and power.—
Foxes and statesmen, subtile wiles ensure;
The cit and polecat stink, and are secure.

VAR. ¹ The peopled fold thy kindly care have found,
The horned bull tremendous spurns the ground:
The lordly lion has enough and more,
The forest trembles at his very roar.

² puny.

* The variations are from a Fragment in the author's hand, entitled, "The Poet's Progress, a Poem, in embryo."

† Burns wrote to Mrs. Dunlop on the 7th February, 1791, "that by a fall not from my horse, but with my horse, I have been a cripple some time," by which he says he had broken his arm; but there is no allusion in his correspondence to any other accident, except in December, 1787.

Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
 The priest and hedgehog in their robes, are snug.
 Ev'n silly woman has her warlike arts,³ 21
 Her tongue and eyes, her dreaded spear and darts.

But Oh! thou bitter step-mother and hard,
 To thy poor, fenceless, naked child—the Bard!
 A thing unteachable in world's skill,
 And half an idiot too, more helpless still.
 No heels to bear him from the op'ning dun;
 No claws to dig, his hated⁴ sight to shun;
 No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
 And those, alas! not Amalthea's horn: 30
 No nerves olfact'ry, Mammon's trusty cur,⁵
 Clad in rich Dulness' comfortable fur,
 In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
 He bears th' unbroken blast from ev'ry side:
 Vampyre booksellers drain him to the heart,
 And scorpion critics cureless venom dart.

Critics—appall'd I venture on the name,
 Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame:
 Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes;
 He hacks to teach, they mangle to expose. 40

His heart by causeless, wanton malice wrung,
 By blockheads' daring into madness stung;
 His well-won bays, than life itself more dear,
 By miscreants torn, who ne'er one sprig must wear:

VAR. ³ Even silly women have defensive arts;
 Their eyes, their tongues—and nameless other parts.
⁴ dreaded.

⁵ No nerves olfactory, true to Mammon's foot;
 Or grunting grub, sagacious, evil's* root,
 Or grunting, sage, to grub all-evil's* root.
 Vampyre booksellers, &c.

* Money the root of all evil. Scripture.

Foild, bleeding, tortur'd in th' unequal strife,
 The hapless Poet flounders⁶ on thro' life.
 Till fled each hope that once his bosom fir'd,
 And fled each Muse that glorious once inspir'd,
 Low sunk in squalid, unprotected age,
 Dead, even resentment, for his injur'd page, 50
 He heeds or feels no more the ruthless critic's rage!

So, by some hedge, the generous steed deceas'd,
 For half-starv'd snarling curs a dainty feast;
 By toil and famine wore to skin and bone,
 Lies, senseless of each tugging bitch's son.*

VAR. ⁶ flounders.

* In the MS. the following lines occur here:—

Hiatus.

A little, upright, peit, tait, tripping wight,
 And still his precious self his dear delight:
 Who loves his own smart shadow in the streets
 Better than e'er the fairest she he meets.
 Much specious lore, but little understood;
 Veneering oft outshines the solid wood
 A man of fashion too, he made his tour,
 Learned 'vive la bagatelle, et vive l'amour;'
 So learned monkeys their grimace improve,
 Polish their grin, nay sigh for ladies' love.
 His meddling Vanity, a busy fiend,
 Still making work his selfish craft must mend. . . .
 Crochallan† came,
 The old cocked hat, the brown suitout the same;
 His bristly beard just rising in its night,
 ('Twas four long nights and days to shaving night),
 His uncombed, grisly locks, wild-staring thatched
 A head for thought profound and clear unmatched:
 And though his caustic wit was biting rude,
 His heart was warm, benevolent, and good.

† The late William Smellie, printer in Edinburgh.

O Dulness ! portion of the truly blest !
 Calm shelter'd haven of eternal rest !
 Thy sons ne'er madden in the fierce extremes
 Of Fortune's polar frost, or torrid beams.
 If mantling high she fills the golden cup, 60
 With sober selfish ease they sip it up ;
 Conscious the bounteous meed⁷ they well deserve,
 They only wonder "some folks" do not starve.
 The grave sage hern thus easy picks his frog,
 And thinks the mallard a sad worthless dog.
 When disappointment snaps the clue⁸ of hope,
 And thro' disastrous night they darkling grope,
 With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,
 And just conclude that "fools are fortune's care."
 So heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks, 70
 Strong on the sign-post stands⁹ the stupid¹⁰ ox.

Not so the idle Muses' mad-cap train,
 Not such the workings of their moon-struck brain ;
 In equanimity they never dwell,
 By turns in soaring heav'n, or vaulted hell.*

I dread thee, Fate, relentless and severe,
 With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear !
 Already one strong-hold of hope is lost,
 Glencairn,† the truly noble, lies in dust ;
 (Fled, like the sun eclips'd as noon appears, 80
 And left us darkling in a world of tears :) *

VAR. ⁷ their great success.
⁹ hangs.

⁸ thread.
¹⁰ seeming.

* All the rest of this Poem is yet without form, and void in the pericranium of the Poet. MS.

† The allusion to the death of the Earl of Glencairn fixes the date of this address to about February, 1791. Though Burns again addressed Mr. Graham 'on receiving a favour,'

Oh! hear my ardent, grateful, selfish pray'r!
 Fintra, my other stay, long bless and spare!
 Thro' a long life his hopes and wishes crown,
 And bright in cloudless skies his sun go down!
 May bliss domestic smooth his private path;
 Give energy to life; and soothe his latest breath,
 With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!

LAMENT FOR JAMES, EARL OF GLENCAIRN.*



HE wind blew hollow frae the hills,
 By fits the sun's departing beam
 Look'd on the fading yellow woods
 • That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding
 stream:

Beneath a craigy steep, a Bard,
 Laden with years and meikle pain.
 In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
 Whom death had all untimely taen.

and inscribed to him one of his election Ballads, written about December, 1789, commencing,

“ Fintray, my stay in worldly strife,
 Friend of my Muse, friend o' my life,”

he only included one of those pieces in the edition of his works, revised by himself, in 1793 or 1794.

* Burns sent this piece to Lady Elizabeth Cunningham, the sister and eventually co-heiress of James, 14th Earl of Glencairn, who died 30th January, 1791, with the following letter:—

“ MY LADY,

I would, as usual, have availed myself of the privilege your goodness has allowed me, of sending you any thing I

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
 Whose trunk was mouldering down with years ;
 His locks were bleached white with time, 11
 His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears ;
 And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
 And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
 The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
 To echo bore the notes alang.

" Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
 " The reliques of the vernal quire !
 " Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
 " The honours of the aged year ! 20
 " A few short months, and glad and gay,
 " Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e ;

compose in my poetical way ; but as I had resolved, so soon as the shock of my irreparable loss would allow me, to pay a tribute to my late benefactor, I determined to make that the first piece I should do myself the honour of sending you. Had the wing of my fancy been equal to the ardour of my heart, the enclosed had been much more worthy your perusal : as it is, I beg leave to lay it at your ladyship's feet. As all the world knows my obligations to the late Earl of Glencairn, I would wish to show as openly that my heart glows, and shall ever glow, with the most grateful sense and remembrance of his lordship's goodness. The sables I did myself the honour to wear to his lordship's memory were not the 'mockery of woe.' Nor shall my gratitude perish with me :—If, among my children, I shall have a son that has a heart, he shall hand it down to his child as a family honour, and a family debt, that my dearest existence I owe to the noble house of Glencairn ! I was about to say, my Lady, that if you think the poem may venture to see the light, I would, in some way or other, give it to the world." In 1787, Burns wrote to the Earl of Glencairn :—"I wanted to purchase a profile of your lordship, which I was told was to be got in town : but I am truly sorry to see that a blun-

“ But nocht in all revolving time

“ Can gladness bring again to me.

“ I am a bending aged tree,

“ That long has stood the wind and rain ;

“ But now has come a cruel blast.

“ And my last hold of earth is gane :

“ Nae leaf o’ mine shall greet the spring.

“ Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom :

30

“ But I maun lie before the storm,

“ And ithers plant them in my room.

“ I’ve seen sae mony changefu’ years,

“ On earth I am a stranger grown :

“ I wander in the ways of men,

“ Alike unknowing and unknown :

dering painter has spoiled a ‘human face divine.’ The enclosed stanzas I intended to have written below a picture or profile of your lordship, could I have been so happy as to procure one with anything of a likeness.

“As I will soon return to my shades, I wanted to have something like a material object for my gratitude ; I wanted to have it in my power to say to a friend, ‘There is my noble patron, my generous benefactor.’ Allow me, my lord, to publish these verses. I conjure your lordship by the honest throes of gratitude, by the generous wish of benevolence, by all the powers and feelings which compose the magnanimous mind, do not deny me this petition.”

His Lordship did not comply with the Poet’s request, and he probably destroyed the verses, as they have never been found. Lady Elizabeth Cunningham died, unmarried, in 1804. The Poet’s gratitude did not die with his noble patron. In 1794 he sent a copy of the last edition of his poems to the late Earl’s brother, John, 15th Earl of Glencairn, with a letter, which is printed by Cromek ; and he named one of his sons *James Glencairn*, who rose to high rank in the army of the East India Company.

“ Unheard, unpitied, unreliev’d,
“ I bear alane my lade o’ care,
“ For silent, low, on beds of dust,
“ Lie a’ that would my sorrows share. 43

“ And last (the sum of a’ my griefs !)
“ My noble master lies in clay :
“ The flow’r amang our barons bold,
“ His country’s pride, his country’s stay :
“ In weary being now I pine,
“ For a’ the life of life is dead,
“ And hope has left my aged ken,
“ On forward wing for ever fled.

“ Awake thy last sad voice, my harp !
“ The voice of woe and wild despair ! 50
“ Awake, resound thy latest lay,
“ Then sleep in silence evermair ! ”
“ And thou, my last, best, only friend,
“ That fillest an untimely tomb,
“ Accept this tribute from the Bard
“ Thou brought from fortune’s mirkest gloom.

“ In Poverty’s low barren vale,
“ Thick mists, obscure, involv’d me round ;
“ Though oft I turn’d the wistful eye,
“ No ray of fame was to be found : 60
“ Thou found’st me, like the morning sun
“ That melts the fogs in limpid air,
“ The friendless Bard, and rustic song,
“ Became alike thy fostering care.

“ O ! why has worth so short a date ?
“ While villains ripen grey with time !

- “ Must thou, the noble, gen’rous, great,
 “ Fall in bold manhood’s hardy prime ?
 “ Why did I live to see that day ?
 “ A day to me so full of woe ? 70
 “ O ! had I met the mortal shaft
 “ Which laid my benefactor low !

 “ The bridegroom may forget the bride,
 “ Was made his wedded wife yestreen ;
 “ The monarch may forget the crown
 “ That on his head an hour has been ;
 “ The mother may forget the child
 “ That smiles sae sweetly on her knee ;
 “ But I’ll remember thee, Glencairn,
 “ And a’ that thou hast done for me !” 80

LINES, SENT TO SIR JOHN WHITEFORD, OF
WHITEFORD,* BART.

WITH THE FOREGOING POEM.



THOU, who thy honour as thy God re-
 ver'st,
 Who, save thy mind's reproach, nought
 earthly fear'st.
 To thee this votive off'ring I impart,
 The tearful tribute of a broken heart.

* Sir John Whiteford, to whom Burns sent a copy of his “ Lament for the Earl of Glencairn,” was one of his earliest and most valuable patrons. Several letters to him from Sir John Whiteford occur in the Poet's correspondence.

The Friend thou valued'st, I, the Patron, lov'd ;
 His worth, his honour, all the world approv'd.
 We'll mourn till we too go as he has gone,
 And tread the dreary path to that dark world
 unknown.

TAM O' SHANTER.*

A TALE.

Of Brownie's and of Bogilie's full is this Buke.

Gawin Douglas.

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
 And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,
 As market-days are wearing late,
 An' folk begin to tak the gate :

While we sit bousing at the nappy,
 An' getting fou and unco happy,

* "When my father," says Gilbert Burns, "*feued* his little property near Alloway-Kirk, the wall of the churchyard had gone to ruin, and cattle had free liberty of pasturing in it. My father with two or three other neighbours joined in an application to the town council of Ayr, who were superiors of the adjoining land, for liberty to rebuild it, and raised by subscription a sum for enclosing this ancient cemetery with a wall; hence he came to consider it as his burial-place, and we learned that reverence for it people generally have for the burial-place of their ancestors. My brother was living in Ellisland, when Captain Grose, on his peregrinations through Scotland, staid some time at Carc-house, in the neighbourhood, with Captain Robert Riddel, of Glenriddel, a particular friend of my brother's. The Antiquarian and the Poet were 'unco pack and thick thegither.' Robert requested of Captain Grose, when he should come to Ayrshire, that he would make a drawing of Allo-

We thinkna on the lang Scots miles,
 The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
 That lie between us and our hame,
 Whare sits our sulky sullen dame, 10
 Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
 As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
 (Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
 For honest men and bonie lasses).

way-Kirk, as it was the burial-place of his father, and where he himself had a sort of claim to lay down his bones when they should be no longer serviceable to him; and added, by way of encouragement, that it was the scene of many a good story of witches and apparitions, of which he knew the captain was very fond. The captain agreed to the request, provided the poet would furnish a witch story, to be printed along with it. 'Tam o' Shanter' was produced on this occasion, and was first published in Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland*.

"The poem is founded on a traditional story. The leading circumstances of a man riding home very late from Ayr, in a stormy night, his seeing a light in Alloway-Kirk, his having the curiosity to look in, his seeing a dance of witches, with the devil playing on the bagpipe to them, the scanty covering of one of the witches, which made him so far forget himself as to cry—'Weel loupin, short sark!'—with the melancholy catastrophe of the piece; it is all a true story, that can be well attested by many respectable old people in that neighbourhood."

The Poet has, however, himself related the story on which this inimitable production was founded, in a Letter to Francis Grose, the facetious antiquary:

"On a market day in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway kirk-yard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards further on than the said gate, had been detained by his business, 'till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard hour, between night and morning.

O Tam ! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice !
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum ; 20
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou wast na sober ;
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller ;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on ;

“ Though he was terrified, with a blaze streaming from the kirk, yet as it is a well-known fact that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief, he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the kirk-yard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bagpipe. The farmer stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many old women of his acquaintance and neighbourhood. How the gentleman was dressed, tradition does not say ; but the ladies were all in their smocks : and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purpose of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled, that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, ‘ Weel luppen, Maggy wi’ the short shank ! ’ and recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally known fact, that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful hags, were so close at his heels, that one of them actually sprung to seize him ; but it was too late, nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse’s tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning ; but the farmer was beyond her

That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
 Thou drank wi' Kirton Jean till Monday.
 She prophesy'd that, late or soon,
 Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon ; 30
 Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
 By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames ! it gars me greet,
 To think how monie counsels sweet,
 How many lengthen'd, sage advices.
 The husband frae the wife despises !

reach. However, the unsightly, tail less condition of the vigorous steed was to the last hour of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers, not to stay too late in Ayr Markets."—*Cromek's Reliques of Burns*, p. 126—8.

Some of the incidents, and particularly the ghastly exhibition on the Holy Table, were however taken from another "witch story," communicated to Giose on the same occasion : •

"Upon a stormy night, amid whistling squalls of wind, and bitter blasts of hail ; in short, on such a night as the devil would chuse to take the air in ; a farmer or farmer's servant was plodding and plashing homeward with his plough irons on his shoulder, having been getting some repairs on them at a neighbouring smithy. His way lay by the kirk of Alloway, and being rather on the anxious look-out in approaching a place so well known to be a favourite haunt of the devil and the devil's friends and emissaries, he was struck aghast by discovering through the horrors of the storm and stormy night, a light, which on his nearer approach, plainly shewed itself to proceed from the haunted edifice. Whether he had been fortified from above on his devout supplication, as is customary with people when they suspect the immediate presence of Satan ; or whether, according to another custom, he had got courageously drunk at the smithy, I will not pretend to determine ; but so it was that he ventured to go up to, nay into the very kirk. As good luck would have it his temerity came off unpunished.

"The members of the infernal junto were all out on some

But to our tale: Ae market night,
 Tam had got planted unco right ;
 Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
 Wi' reaming swats that drank divinoly ; 40
 And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
 His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony ;
 Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither ;
 They had been fou for weeks thegither.
 The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter ;
 And ay the ale was growing better :

midnight business or other, and he saw nothing but a kind of kettle or caldion, depending from the roof, over the fire, simmering some heads of unchristened children, limbs of executed malefactors, &c. for the business of the night.—It was, in for a penny, in for a pound, with the honest ploughman: so without ceremony he unhooked the caldron from off the fire, and pouring out the damnable ingredients, inverted it on his head, and carried it fairly home, where it remained long in the family, a living evidence of the truth of the story.”—*Ibid.* p. 125—6.

“Tam o’ Shanter” appears to have been written about November, 1790; for in a letter of that date to Mrs. Dunlop, Burns said he had a copy ready to be sent to her by the first opportunity, it being too heavy for the post. “It was,” he informs Mr. Tytler (afterwards Lord Woodhouselee), “his own favourite poem;” and he says, “to have that poem, an essay in a walk of the Muses entirely new to him, so much applauded by one of the first judges, was the most delicious vibration that ever trilled along the heart-strings of a poor poet.” To Mrs. Dunlop he thus wrote, on the 11th of April, 1791:—“On Saturday morning last, Mrs. Burns made me a present of a fine boy; rather stouter, but not so handsome as your godson was at his time of life. Indeed, I look on your little namesake to be my *chef d’œuvre* in that species of manufacture, as I look on ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ to be my standard performance in the poetical line. ’Tis true, both the one and the other discover a spice of roguish waggery, that might, perhaps, be as well spared; but then they also show, in my opinion, a force of genius, and a finishing polish, that I despair of ever excelling.”

The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
 Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious :
 The souter tauld his queerest stories ;
 The landlord's laugh was ready chorus : 59
 The storm without might rair and rustle,
 Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
 E'en drown'd himsel' amang the nappy,
 As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
 The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure :
 Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
 O'er a' the ills o' life victorious !

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
 You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed ; 60
 Or like the snow-falls in the river,
 A moment white—then melts for ever ;
 Or like the borgealis race,
 That flit ere you can point their place ;
 Or like the rainbow's lovely form
 Evanishing amid the storm.—
 Nae man can tether time or tide ;—
 The hour approaches Tam maun ride ;
 That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
 That dreary hour he mounts his beast in ; 70
 And sic a night he taks the road in,
 As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last ;
 The rattling show'rs rose on the blast ;
 The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd ;
 Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd :
 That night, a child might understand,
 The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,

A better never lifted leg, 80
 Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
 Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
 Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet;
 Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
 Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
 Lest bogles catch him unawares;
 Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
 Where ghaists and houlets nightly cry.—

By this time he was cross the ford,
 Where in the snaw, the chapman smoor'd; 90
 And past the birks and meikle stane,
 Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
 And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
 Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
 And near the thorn, aboon the well,
 Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.—
 Before him Doon pours all his floods;
 The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
 Near and more near the thunders roll: 100
 When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
 Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
 Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing;
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.—

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
 Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
 Wi' usquebae, we'll face the devil!—
 The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
 Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle. 110
 But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
 Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,

She ventur'd forward on the light ;
 And, ~~vow~~ ! Tam ~~saw~~ an unco sight !
 Warlocks and witches in a dance ;
 Nae cotillon brent new frac France,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
 Put life and mettle in their heels.
 A winnock-bunker in the east,
 There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast ; 120
 A towsie tyke, black, grim, and large,
 To gie them music was his charge :
 He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—
 Coffins stood round like open presses,
 That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses ,
 And by some devilish cantrip slight
 Each in its cauld hand held a light,—
 By which heroe Tam was able
 To note upon the haly table, 130
 A murderer's banes in gibbet airns ;
 Twa spang-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns
 A thief, new-cutted frae a rape.
 Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape ;
 Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted ;
 Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted ;
 A garter, which a babo had strangled ;
 A knife, a father's throat had mangled.
 Whom his ain son o' life bereft.
 The grey hairs yet stack to the heft ; * 140
 Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',

* The following four lines appear to have originally occurred here :

" Three lawyers' tongues turned inside out,
 Wi' lies seamed, like a beggar's clout :

Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious :
The piper loud and louder blew ;
The dancers quick and quicker flew ;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark ! 150

Now Tam, O Tam ! had thae been queans,
A' plump and strapping in their teens ;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linnen !
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies ! -

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwooddie hags wad spean a foal, 160

Three priests' hearts rotten, black as muck,
Lay stinking, vile, in every neuk."

But Burns afterwards omitted them at the suggestion of Lord Woodhouselee, who observed to him in a letter dated in March, 1791 :

" 'The gray hairs yet stack to the heft.'

And here, after the two following lines, ' Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu,' &c. the descriptive part might perhaps have been better closed, than the four lines which succeed, which though good in themselves, yet as they derive all their merit from the satire they contain, are here rather misplaced among the circumstances of pure horror." To which the Poet replied, " As to the faults you detected in the piece, they are truly there: one of them, the hit at the lawyer and priest, I shall cut out."

Lowping and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie,
There was ae winsome wench and walie,
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kend on Carrick shore ;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear) 170
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.—
Ah ! little kend thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches).
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches !

But here my muse her wing maun cour :
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r ; 180
To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
(A souple jade she was, and strang),
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd.
And thought his very een enrich'd :
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main :
Till first ae caper, syne anther,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, " Weel done, Cutty-sark !"
And in an instant all was dark : 190
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied.
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,

When plundering herds assail their byke ;
 As open pussie's mortal foes,
 When, pop ! she starts beforo their nose ;
 As eager runs the market-crowd,
 When, " Catch the thief ! " resounds aloud ;
 So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
 Wi' monie an eldritch skreech and hollow. 200

Ah, Tam ! ah, Tam ! thou'll get thy fairin !
 In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin !
 In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin !
 Kate soon will be a woefu' woman !
 Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
 And win the key-stane* of the brig ;
 There at them thou thy tail may toss,
 A running stream they darena cross.
 But ere the key-stane she could make,
 The fient a tail she had to shake ! 210
 For Nannie, far before the rest,
 Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
 And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle ;
 But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
 Ae spring brought off her master hale,
 But left behind her ain gray tail :
 The carlin clautht her by the rump,
 And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
 Ilk man and mother's son, tak heed ; 220

* It is a well-known fact, that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller, that when he falls in with bogles, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back. R. B.

Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
 Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
 Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
 Remember Tam o' Shanter's marc.

ON THE LATE CAPTAIN GROSE'S
 PEREGRINATIONS THRO' SCOTLAND, COLLECTING
 THE ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM.*

HEAR, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots,
 Frae Muidenkirk to Johnny Groats :—
 If there's a hole in a' your coats,
 I rede you tent it :
 A chield's arrang you taking notes,
 And, faith, he'll prent it.

If in your bounds ye chance to light
 Upon a fine, fat, fodge! wight,

* On sending this Poem to Mr. Graham, in December, 1789, Burns said, "If you know or have ever seen Captain Grose, the antiquarian, you will enter into any humour there is in the verses on him. Perhaps you may have seen them before, as I sent them to a London newspaper." To Dr. Moore, in February, 1791, Burns observed, "I do not know, sir, whether you are a subscriber to Grose's 'Antiquities of Scotland:' if you are, the enclosed poem will not be altogether new to you. Captain Grose did me the favour to send me a dozen copies of the proof-sheet; of which this is one. Should you have read the piece before, still this will answer the principal end I have in view: it will give me another opportunity of thanking you for all your goodness to the rustic bard; and also of shewing you that the abilities you have been pleased to commend and patronize are still employed in the way you wish."

O' stature short, but genius bright,
 That's he, mark weel— 10
 And wow! he has an unco slight
 O' cauk and keel.

By some auld, houlet-haunted biggin,*
 Or kirk deserted by its riggin,
 It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in
 Some eldritch part,
 Wi' deils, they say, Lord save's! colleaguin
 At some black art.—

Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or chammer,
 Ye gipsy-gang that deal in glamor, 20
 And you deep read in hell's black grammar,
 Warlocks and witches,
 Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer; •
 Ye midnight bitches.

It's tauld he was a sodger bred,
 And ane wad rather fa'n than fled;
 But now he's quat the spurtle-blade,
 And dog-skin wallet,
 And taen the—Antiquarian trade,
 I think they call it. 20

He has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets:
 Rusty airn caps and jinglin jackets,†
 Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,
 A towmont gude;

* Vide his Antiquities of Scotland. R. B.

† Vide his Treatise on Ancient Armour and Weapons.

And parritch-pats, and auld saut-buckets,
Before the Flood.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder ;
Auld Tubalcain's fire-shool and fender ;
That which distinguished the gender
O' Balaam's ass ; 40
A broom-stick o' the witch of Endor,
Weel shod wi' brass.

Forbye, he'll shape you aff, fu' gleg
The cut of Adam's philibeg ;
The knife that nicket Abel's craig
He'll prove you fully,
It was a faulding joeteleg,
Or lang-kail gullie.—

But wad ye see him in his glee,
For meikle glee and fun has he, 50
Then set him down, and twa or three
Gude fellows wi' him ;
And port, O port ! shine thou a wee,
And then ye'll see him !

Now, by the Pow'rs o' verse and prose !
Thou art a dainty chield, O Grose !—
Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
They sair misca' thee ;
I'd take the rascal by the nose,
Wad say, Shame fa' thee ! 60

ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME,
WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT AT.*

April, 1789.



INHUMAN man! curse on thy barb'rous
art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming
eye;

May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go, live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,
The bitter little that of life remains;
No more the thickening brakes and verdant
plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

* In a letter to Mr. Cunningham, dated Ellisland, 4th May, 1789, Burns says, "I have just put the last hand to a little poem, which I think will be something to your taste. One morning lately as I was out pretty early in the fields sowing some grass seeds, I heard the burst of a shot from a neighbouring plantation, and presently a poor little wounded hare came limping by me. You will guess my indignation at the inhuman fellow who could shoot a hare at this season, when they all of them have young ones. Indeed there is something in that business of destroying, for our sport, individuals in the animal creation that do not injure us materially, which I could never reconcile to my ideas of virtue."

Allan Cunningham states, that the person alluded to was James Thomson, who told him that Burns was walking on Nithside when the hare ran bleeding by him, upon which he came up to Thomson, cursed him, and said he would not mind throwing him into the river. Thomson added, "And I'll warrant he would hae don't, though I was both young and strong."

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,¹
 No more of rest, but now thy dying bed ! 10
 The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
 The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Oft as by winding Nith, I, musing, wait,
 The sober eve, or hail the chearful dawn,
 I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
 And curse the ruffian's aim,² and mourn thy hap-
 less fate.

VAR. ¹ This verse originally stood :

Seek, mangled innocent, some wonted form ;
 That wonted form, alas ! thy dying bed,
 The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
 The cold earth with thy blood-stain'd bosom warm.

And was followed by,

Perhaps a mother's anguish adds its woe ;
 * The playful pair crowd fondly by thy side .
 Ah ! helpless nurslings, who will now provide
 That life a mother only can bestow ?

-² Originally,

“ And curse the ruthless wretch, and,” &c.

These alterations were made in conformity with what Burns calls Dr. Gregory's “ iron criticism,” but he had himself observed, on sending the verses to Mr. Cunningham, “ I am doubtful whether it would not be an improvement to keep out the last stanza but one altogether.”

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON,*

ON CROWNING HIS BUST AT EDNAM, ROXBURGH-SHIRE, WITH BAYS.



While virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,
Unfolds her tender mantle green.
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
Or tunes Eolian strains between :

While Summer with a matron grace
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
The progress of the spiky blade ;¹

VAR. ¹ The "Address to the Shade of Thomson" began in the first manuscript copy in the following manner :

While cold-eyed Spring, a virgin coy,
Unfolds her verdant mantle sweet,
Or pranks the sod in frolic joy,
A carpet for her youthful feet :

While Summer, with a matron's grace,
Walks stately in the cooling shade,
And oft delighted loves to trace
The progress of the spiky blade :

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
With age's hoary honours clad,
Surveys, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed, &c.

* In June, 1791, Lord Buchan invited Burns to "make one at the coronation of Thomson's bust on Ednam Hill, on the 22d of September following, for which day, perhaps, his Muse may inspire an Ode suited to the occasion." The Poet appeared to be highly flattered by the invitation, but declined it, saying he could not be absent from his farm in the middle of August. His letter to Lord Buchan thus proceeds :—"Your lordship hints at an Ode for the occasion ; but who would write after Collins? I read over his verses to the memory of Thomson, and despaired ; I got indeed to the length of three or four stanzas, in the way of address to the

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
 By Tweed creets his aged head, 10
 And sees,¹ with self-approving mind,
 Each creature on his bounty fed :

While maniac Winter rages o'er
 The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
 Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
 Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows ;

So long, sweet Poet of the year,
 Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won ;
 While Scotia, with exulting tear,
 Proclaims that Thomson was her son. 20

TO

MISS CRUIKSHANK,* A VERY YOUNG LADY,

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A BOOK,

PRESENTED TO HER BY

THE AUTHOR.

BEAUTEOUS rose-bud, young and gay,
 Blooming in thy early May,²
 Never may'st thou, lovely Flow'r,
 Chilly shrink in sleety show'r !
 Never Boreas' hoary path,

VAR. ¹ While Autumn by Tweed's fruitful side,
 With sober pace and hoary head,
 Surveys in self-approving pride. MS.

² on the early day.

shade of the bard, on crowning his bust. I shall trouble your lordship with the subjoined copy of them, which, I am afraid, will be but too convincing a proof how unequal I am to the task."

* "Written on the blank leaf of a book which I presented to a very young lady whom I had formerly characterized

Never Eurus' pois'nous breath,
Never baleful stellar lights,
Taint thee with untimely blights !
Never, never reptile thief
Riot on thy virgin leaf ! 10
Nor even Sol too fiercely view
Thy bosom blushing still with dew !
May'st thou long, sweet crimson gem,
Richly deck thy native stem ;
Till some ev'ning, sober, calm,
Dropping dews, and breathing balm,
While all around the woodland rings,
And ev'ry bird thy requiem sings ;
Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
Shed thy dying honours round, 20
And resign to parent earth
The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.

under the denomination of 'The Rose Bud.' February, 1791." Miss Jeanie Cruikshank was the daughter of one of the masters of the High School of Edinburgh, and was, according to Mr. Allan Cunningham, "not only beautiful, but sang with feeling, and played on various musical instruments with such grace as called forth, on several occasions, the commendations of the Bard." In a letter to her father, in 1787, Burns sent his "respectful kind compliments to Mrs. Cruikshank, and my dear little Jeanie."

ON READING, IN A NEWSPAPER,
 THE DEATH OF JOHN M'LEOD, ESQ.
 BROTHER TO A YOUNG LADY, A PARTICULAR
 FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR'S.¹



AD thy tale, thou idle page,
 And rueful thy alarms:
 Death tears the brother of her love
 From Isabella's arms.

Sweetly deckt with pearly dew
 The morning rose may blow;
 But cold successive noontide blasts
 May lay its beauties low.

Fair on Isabella's morn
 The sun propitious smil'd;
 But, long ere noon, succeeding clouds
 Succeeding hopes beguil'd.

10

Fate oft tears the bosom chords
 That Nature finest strung:
 So Isabella's heart was form'd
 And so that² heart was wrung.

Dread Omnipotence, alone,
 Can heal the wound He gave;

VAR. ¹ "Brother to Miss Isabella M'Leod, a particular acquaintance of the author." Burns' MS.

² The following variations occur on a copy in the Poet's hand writing.

² her.

Can point the brimful grief-worn eyes³
To scenes beyond the grave.

20

Virtue's blossoms there shall blow,
And fear no withering blast;
There Isabella's spotless worth
Shall happy be at last.

THE

HUMBLE PETITION OF BRUAR WATER,*
TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE.†



Y Lord, I know your noble ear
Woe ne'er assails in vain;
Embolden'd thus, I beg you'll hear
Your humble Slave complain,
How saucy Phoebus' scorching beams,

VAR. ³ Can point the grief-worn brimful eyes.

Mr. Allan Cunningham says he has "restored another verse from the Poet's manuscripts," and which forms the fourth of the copy in his edition of Burns' works.

Were it in the poet's power,
Strong as he shares the grief
That pierces Isabella's heart,
To give that heart relief.

The resemblance of the last two lines to those of the preceding stanza, shows that the author did not intend to retain both verses; and in the edition of his works, revised by himself in 1794, the Poem is printed as it stands in the text.

* Bruar Falls in Athole are exceedingly picturesque and beautiful; but their effect is much impaired by the want of trees and shrubs. R. B.

† On sending this poem to Mr. Walker from Inverness 5th September, 1787, Burns says, "I have just time to write

In flaming summer-pride,
Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
And drink my crystal tide.

the foregoing, and to tell you that it was (at least most part of it) the effusion of an half hour I spent at Bruar. I do not mean it was *extempore*, for I have endeavoured to brush it up as well as Mr. Nicol's chat, and the jogging of the chaise, would allow. It eases my heart a good deal, as rhyme is the coin with which a poet pays his debts of honour or gratitude. What I owe to the noble family of Athole, of the first kind, I shall ever proudly boast; what I owe of the last, so help me God in my hour of need, I shall never forget. 'The little 'angel band!'—I declare I prayed for them very sincerely to-day at the Fall of Fyars. I shall never forget the fine family-piece I saw at Blair: the amiable, the truly noble duchess, with her smiling little seraph in her lap, at the head of the table: the lovely 'olive plants,' as the Hebrew bard finely says, round the happy mother; the beautiful Mrs. G——: the lovely sweet Miss C., &c. I wish I had the powers of Guido to do them justice! My Lord Duke's kind hospitality, markedly kind, indeed—Mr. Graham of Finty's charms of conversation—Sir W. Murray's friendship—in short, the recollection of all that polite, agreeable company, raises an honest glow in my bosom." Mr. Walker gives the following account of Burns' visit: "He passed two or three days with the Duke of Atholl, and was highly delighted by the attention he received, and the company to whom he was introduced. These, on the other hand, were no less pleased with the correct and manly deportment of the interesting stranger. As the hour of supper was distant, he begged I would guide him through the grounds. It was already growing dark, yet the softened, though faint and uncertain view of their beauties which the moonlight afforded us, seemed exactly suited to the state of his feelings at the time. When we reached a rustic hut on the river Tilt, where it is overhung by a woody precipice, he threw himself on the heathy seat, and gave himself up to a tender, abstracted, and voluptuous enthusiasm of imagination. By the Duke's advice he visited the Falls of Bruar, and in a few days I received a letter from Inverness with the verses enclosed."

Tho lightly-jumping glowrin trouts,
 That thro' my waters play, 10
 If, in their random, wanton spouts,
 They near the margin stray ;
 If, hapless chance ! they linger lang,
 I'm scorching up so shallow,
 They're left the whitening stanes amang,
 In gasping death to wallow.

Last day I grat wi' spite and teen.
 As Poet Burns came by,
 That to a Bard, I should be seen
 Wi' half my channel dry :— 20
 A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
 Even as I was he shor'd me ;
 But had I in my glory been,
 He, kneeling, wad ador'd me.

Here, foaming down the shelvy rocks,
 In twisting strength I rin ;
 There, high my boiling torrent smokes,
 Wild-roaring o'er a linn :
 Enjoying large each spring and well
 As Nature gave them me, 30
 I am, altho' I say't mysel,
 Worth gaun a mile to see.

Would then my noble master please
 To grant my highest wishes,
 He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees,
 And bonie spreading bushes.*
 Delighted doubly then, my Lord,

* This part of the Petition has been successful, and the banks are now clothed as verdantly as the Poet could desire.

You'll wander on my banks,
And listen monie a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.

49

The sober laverock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire ;
The gowdspink, Music's gayest child,²
Shall sweetly join the choir :
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear.
The mavis mild and mellow ;
The robin pensive Autumn cheer,
In all her locks of yellow :

This too, a covert shall ensure,
To shield them from the storm ;
And coward maukin sleep secure,
Low in her grassy form :
Here shall the shepherd make his seat.
To weave his crown of flow'rs ;
Or find a sheltering safe retreat,
From prone-descending show'rs.

50

And here, by sweet endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising worlds with all their wealth
As empty, idle care :
The flow'rs shall vie in all their charms
The hour of heav'n to grace,
And birks extend their fragrant arms,
To screen the dear embrace.

60

Here haply too, at vernal dawn,
Some musing-bard may stray,

VAR. ² The bairdie, Music's youngest child.

And eye the smoking, dewy lawn,
And misty mountain, grey ;
Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,
Mild-chequering thro' the trees,
Rave to my darkly dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool.
Their shadows' wat'ry bed !
Let fragrant birks in woodbines drest
My craggy cliffs adorn ;
And, for the little songster's nest,
The close embow'ring thorn.

So may, Old Scotia's darling hope.
Your little angel band,
Spring, like their father's, up to prop
Their honour'd native land !
So may thro' Albion's farthest ken,
To social-flowing glasses
The grace be—"Athole's honest men,
And Athole's bonnie lasses !"

THE KIRK OF SCOTLAND'S ALARM,*

A SATIRE.

A BALLAD TUNE—"PUSH ABOUT THE BRISK BOWL."



ORTHODOX, Orthodox,¹ wha believe in
John Knox,

Let me sound an alarm to your con-
science:

There's a heretic blast has been blawn in the wast
"That what is not sense must be nonsense."

VAR. ¹ Brother Scots, brother Scots.

* This Poem was written a short time after the publication of Dr. McGill's Essay.

On the 7th of August, 1789, Burns wrote to Mr. John Logan:—"I have, as you will shortly see, finished the 'Kirk's Alarm;' but now that it is done, and that I have laughed once or twice at the conceits in some of the stanzas, I am determined not to let it get to the public; so I send you this copy, the first that I have sent to Ayrshire, except some few of the stanzas which I wrote off in embryo for Gavin Hamilton, under the express provision and request, that you will only read it to a few of us, and do not, on any account, give, or permit to be taken, any copy of the ballad. If I could be of any service to Dr. McGill, I would do it, though it should be at a much greater expense than irritating a few bigoted priests, but I am afraid serving him in his present *embarras* is a task too hard for me. I have enemies enow, God knows, though I do not wantonly add to the number. Still, as I think there is some merit in two or three of the thoughts, I send it to you as a small, but sincere testimony how much and with what respectful esteem, I am, &c."

In December following he said to Mr. Graham of Fintray:—"Though I dare say you have none of the solemn league and covenant fire, which shone so conspicuous in Lord George Gordon, and the Kilmarnock weavers, yet I think you must

Dr. Mac,* Dr. Mac, you should stretch on a rack,
 To strike evil doers² wi' terror;
 To join faith and sense upon onie pretence,
 Is heretic, damnable error.

Town of Ayr, town of Ayr, it was mad I declare,
 To meddle wi' mischief a-browsing;
 Provost John is still deaf to the church's relief,
 And orator Bob† is its ruin.

D'rymple mild, D'rymple mild, tho' your heart's
 like a child,
 And your life like the new driven snaw,
 Yet that winna save ye, auld Satan must have ye,
 For preaching that three's ane and twa.

VAR. ² wicked writers.

have heard of Dr. M'Gill, one of the clergymen of Ayr, and his heretical book. God help him, poor man! Though he is one of the worthiest, as well as one of the ablest of the whole priesthood of the Kirk of Scotland, in every sense of that ambiguous term, yet the poor doctor and his numerous family are in imminent danger of being thrown out to the mercy of the winter winds. The inclosed ballad on that business is, I confess, too local, but I laughed myself at some conceits in it, though I am convinced in my conscience that there are a good many heavy stanzas in it too."

The 'Kirk's Alarm' was never printed by Burns' own authority. It seems to have first appeared in a collection of his suppressed poems, published at Glasgow, in 1801.

Lockhart gives the following history of the "Kirk's Alarm:"—"M'Gill and Dalrymple, the two ministers of the town of Ayr, had long been suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions on several points, particularly the doctrine of Original Sin and the Trinity; and the former at length published an essay, which was considered as demanding the notice of the church courts. More than a year

* Dr. M'Gill.

† Robert Aiken.

Rumble John,* Rumble John, mount the steps wi'
a groan,

Cry the book is wi' heresy cramm'd ;
Then lug out your ladle, deal brimstane like adle,
And roar ev'ry note of the damn'd. 20

Simper James,† Simper James, leave the fair Kil-
lie dames,

There's a holier chase in your view ;
I'll lay on your head, that the pack ye'll soon lead,
For puppies like you there's but few.

Singet Sawney,‡ Singet Sawney, are ye herding
the penny,

Unconscious what evils await ?

was spent in the discussions which arose out of this; and at last, Dr. M'Gill was fain to acknowledge his errors, and promise that he would take an early opportunity of apologizing for them to his congregation from the pulpit, which promise, however, he never performed. The gentry of the country took, for the most part, the side of M'Gill, who was a man of cold, unpopular manners, but of unrepined moral character, and possessed of some accomplishments, though certainly not of distinguished talents. The bulk of the lower orders espoused with far more fervid zeal the cause of those who conducted the prosecution against this erring doctor. Gavin Hamilton, and all persons of his stamp, were of course on the side of M'Gill—Auld and the Mauchline elders, with his enemies. Robert Aiken, a writer in Ayr, a man of remarkable talents, particularly in public speaking, had the principal management of M'Gill's cause before the Presbytery, and, I believe, also before the Synod. He was an intimate friend of Hamilton, and through him had about this time formed an acquaintance which soon ripened into a warm friendship with Burns. Burns was, therefore, from the beginning a zealous, as in the end he was perhaps the most effective partizan of the side on which Aiken had staked so much of his reputation."

* Mr. Russell. † Mr. M'Kinlay. ‡ Mr. Moodie.

Wi' a jump, yell, and howl, alarm every soul,
For the foul thief³ is just at your gate.

Daddy Auld,* Daddy Auld, there's a tod in the fauld,
A tod meikle waur than the Clerk ; 30
Tho' ye can do little skaith, ye'll be in at the doath,⁴
And gif ye canna bite, ye may bark.

Davie Bluster,† Davie Bluster, if for a saint ye do
muster,
The corps is no nice of recruits :
Yet to worth let's be just, royal blood ye might
boast,
If the ass was the king of the brutes.

Jamy⁵ Goose,‡ Jamy⁵ Goose, ye hae made but toom
roose,
In hunting the wicked Lieutenant ;
But the Doctor's your mark, for the L—d's haly ark,
He has cooper'd and caw'd a wrang pin in't. 40

Poet Willie,§ Poet Willie, gie the Doctor a volley,
Wi' your "liberty's chain" and your wit ;
O'er Pegasus' side ye ne'er laid astride,
Ye but smelt, man, the place where he sh-t.⁶

Andro Gouk,|| Andro Gouk, ye may slander the
book,
And the book no the waur, let me tell ye !

VAR. ³ Hannibal's.

⁴ Douglas Heron and Co. has e'en laid you fu' low.

⁵ Billie.

⁶ Ye only stood where he sh—, &c.

* Mr. Auld.

† Mr. Grant of Ochiltree.

‡ Mr. Young of Cumnock.

§ Mr. Peebles of Ayr.

|| Dr. A. Mitchell.

Ye are rich, and look big, but lay by hat and wig,
And ye'll hae a calf's head o' sma' value.

Barr Steenie,* Barr Steenie, what mean ye? what
mean ye?

If ye'll meddle nae mair wi' the matter, 50
Ye may hae some pretence to havins and sense,
Wi' people wha ken ye nae better.

Irvine Side,†, Irvine Side, wi' your turkeycock
pride,

Of manhood but sma' is your share;
Ye've the figure, 'tis true, even your faes will allow,
And your friends they dare grant you nae mair.

Muirland Jock‡, Muirland Jock, when the Lord
makes a rock

To crush common sense for her sins,
If ill manners were wit, there's no mortal so fit
To confound the poor Doctor at ance. 60

Holy Will,§ Holy Will, there was wit i' your skull,
When ye pilfer'd the alms o' the poor;
The timmer is scant when ye're ta'en for a saint,
Wha should swing in a rape for an hour.

Calvin's sons, Calvin's sons, seize your sp'ritual guns,
Ammunition you never can need;
Your hearts are the stuff will be powther enough,
And your skulls are storehouses o' lead.

VAR. 7 With real battle powder, be sure double load her,
And the bullets Divinity lead, Calvin's sons.

* Mr. Stephen Young of Barr.

† Mr. Smith of Galston.

‡ Mr. Shepherd.

§ An Elder in Mauchline.

Poet Burns, Poet Burns, wi' your priest skelping
turns,

Why desert ye your auld native shire? 70

Your muse is a gipsie, e'en tho' she were tipsie,

She cou'd ca' us nae waur than we are.

END OF VOL. I.

